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Senate

(Legislative day of Monday, March 1, 2021)

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, restore us and bring us back to You. Give us back the joy we once felt in Your presence. By Your mercies, we have navigated through dangers, toils, and snares. Mighty God, You have been faithful.

Today, give our Senators the wisdom to seek Your guidance. May they daily read Your Word to find light for the road ahead. Lord, help them to experience the certainty that comes from embracing Your precepts. Inspired by reverence for You, may they find and stay on the right path.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 2, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to legislative session.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today, the Senate continues its steady progress in improving highly qualified nominees to serve in the executive branch. Last night, the Senate confirmed Dr. Miguel Cardona as the Secretary of Education, fulfilling President Biden's promise to elevate someone with public school experience. Gina Raimondo will soon become the former Governor of Rhode Island as she prepares to take on the top job at the Commerce Department. Pending the Senate's approval, Dr. Cecilia Rouse will soon become the Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers.

This morning, I want to pause for a moment to recognize the historic nature of the nominees whom President

Biden has nominated and the Senate has confirmed in the first month of the Nation's administration.

So far, the Senate has promoted the first Black Secretary of Defense and the first woman to serve as Deputy Secretary of Defense.

After an unbroken streak of 77 male Secretaries in a row, all the way back to Alexander Hamilton, the Senate confirmed the first woman to serve as Treasury Secretary.

By the end of the day, we will have confirmed the first Black woman to lead the Council of Economic Advisers, the first Latino and first immigrant to lead the Department of Homeland Security, the second Black woman to serve as U.N. Ambassador, the third Latino to serve as Education Secretary, and the first openly gay Secretary of any Cabinet Agency.

Cabinet Agencies, we all know, have an immense influence over the policy of the United States. It is critical for their leaders to have lived experiences that represent the broad spectrum of Americans those Agencies serve. Not only that, but the nominees I just mentioned are some of the most qualified public servants in America and are already hard at work at delivering results for the American people.

The Senate will continue to confirm more nominees as quickly as possible. The process can certainly move more quickly with the cooperation of our Republican colleagues, whose States and constituents benefit equally from having these qualified nominees in place.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on COVID-19, as early as tomorrow, the Senate will begin work on the American Rescue Plan. As the country faces a series of historic challenges, we must meet the moment with a historic response.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Millions of jobs and trillions of dollars have been taken out of our economy. Thousands of small businesses are holding on for dear life. Tens of millions of Americans are struggling with the rent, groceries, medicine, and utilities.

Only a week ago, the United States crossed the tragic milestone of half a million deaths from COVID-19, a stark reminder that the pandemic isn't done with us yet.

Over the past year, Congress has stepped up to the plate to pass important relief measures, but the job is not complete. The American Rescue Plan is designed to finish the job; to patch up the holes in our economy and lay a foundation for recovery; to keep struggling businesses, families, and workers afloat until brighter days appear on the horizon; to send our children back to school as quickly and safely as possible; and to defeat this evil disease once and for all.

That is what the American people sent us here to do. That is what our government is for—not to sit back and wait for problems to fix themselves, not to cross our fingers and hope the economy will recover on its own. Our job is to end, through action, the current state of the crisis and hasten the day when our country and all of our lives can return to normal.

The bottom line, if you look at the trajectory, every time we put in a relief bill—in March, the economy got better in June, and July. We put a relief bill in December, and now the numbers look a little better for January.

But the economy is not strong enough to sustain things on its own. We need strong relief to get the economy going so it can continue on an upward path on its own. That is what this bill is designed to do. I fear—most economists, Secretary Yellen, Chairman Powell—if we do too little or nothing, the economy could stay mired in recession for all too long a time, just as it did when we didn't do enough in 2009, and the economy stayed in recession for many years after the financial crisis.

VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on voting rights, in our American system, we talk a lot about “perfecting our Union,” a reference to the preamble of the Constitution, a document which effectively gave only White male landowners the right to vote in our fledgling democracy. Suffice it to say, there is a lot of perfecting to do.

As I think about my Democratic caucus—incidentally, it is probably so that less than half of them could actually vote in the elections of 1789 because I believe in many States you had to be White, male, Protestant, a property owner—not so many of those around here.

Over the course of 230 years, we passed scores of laws and amended the Constitution to reflect the flaws in our

democracy and expand the franchise to all our citizens, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the 14th, 15th, 19th, 23rd, 24th, 26th amendments—just to name a few.

Despite all this progress, there is now, in the 21st century, a concerted effort to roll back voting rights in State legislatures across the country, alarmingly making it harder—harder—for Americans to vote and particularly aimed at Americans of color—African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. And it is becoming a feature of one of America's major political parties.

Yesterday, I detailed a number of laws pushed by Republicans in State legislatures to limit the amount of time that Americans have to vote, to frustrate election administration in urban areas and around college campuses, to impose overly burdensome ID requirements, absurd witness and signature requirements for absentee ballots. Maybe the most pernicious of all, Republicans in Georgia have coalesced around a plan to end all early voting on Sundays, a day when Black churches organize voter drives, with no good reason—again, none.

The threat to voting rights in America is now very real. It must be opposed in every State house and Governor's mansion in this country.

And the threat extends all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States. Eight years ago, a conservative 5-to-4 majority on the Court gutted the Voting Rights Act by essentially rendering meaningless section 5 of the statute, a provision which prevented the implementation of undue voting restrictions in a State with a history of discrimination.

Chief Justice Roberts suggested that the era of widespread discrimination, which led to the enactment of the Voting Rights Act, was over, and there was no longer a need for the critical portions of the statute. Well, within 24 hours after the ruling had been handed down, Texas announced it would implement a strict voter ID law, and soon thereafter, Mississippi and Alabama followed with laws that had previously been barred by the Justice Department.

Republican leaders in the State of North Carolina passed a suite of voter suppression laws that a Federal judge found targeted African-American voters “with . . . surgical precision.” Think about that. This was not a ruling from the Reconstruction Era or Jim Crow. It was only a few years ago.

At a time when an African-American man elected by the most diverse coalition in the history of American politics occupied the White House, Republicans in North Carolina passed voting laws so pernicious that even the Roberts Court—among the most conservative we have seen on this issue of voting rights—could not ignore the overwhelming stench of discrimination. That is what it was—a stench rooted in

America's sordid history of voter suppression and discrimination against Black voters.

Well, today the Supreme Court will hear another case concerning the Voting Rights Act, this time about section 2, a section which Chief Justice Roberts referred to in the Shelby County ruling as a necessary failsafe to police discriminatory voting procedures nationwide.

As one news outlet reported this morning, “there is every possibility that the high court could make it more difficult, or practically impossible, to challenge voting restrictions in the future,” warning that another ruling against the law could render the Voting Rights Act “a dead letter.”

That is what is at stake in America right now. As State legislatures move to restrict voting rights from one end of the country to the other, the law we rely on to prevent outright discrimination at the ballot box is at risk of being “a dead letter.” This is one of the most appalling things I have seen in this country after 4 years of an appalling administration. This is just incredible. It burns my blood and should burn the blood of every fair-minded American—Republican, Democrat, Independent, liberal, conservative.

After centuries of expanding the right to vote, of struggling to get that right to vote, these pernicious, self-serving proposed laws cut back on the right to vote. Will the Supreme Court let that happen? It is so against what America is all about.

We cannot stand by and do nothing as these rights are diluted or stripped away. Congress must pursue a restoration of the Voting Rights Act, and by all accounts should be working in a bipartisan way to make it easier, safer, and more convenient for all Americans to vote. The judgment of history has never been kind to those who work against the full participation of their fellow citizens in our democratic experiment.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, there has been a lot of discussion about the Democrats' decision to load up their partisan spending bill with liberal items that are completely unrelated to the pandemic.

We are at a key turning point in this crisis. The Nation has just endured a historically painful year. This virus has stolen half a million American lives. It has thrown millions of children out of classrooms and workers out of jobs.

But on every front there seem to be signs we are actually turning the tide.

New cases, hospitalizations, and deaths have been declining. The CDC reports that one in five adult Americans has already received at least one vaccine dose. That is 50-plus million people. One in 10 has gotten both shots. And the supply of vaccines is continuing to ramp up with yet another authorized just last weekend.

Meanwhile, science keeps confirming it is quite safe to get kids and teachers back in the classroom with simple precautions that we can accomplish right now. All indications suggest our economy is poised for a roaring comeback for workers and for families.

This crossroads should give Washington a golden opportunity. We could get together on a bipartisan basis like we did five times last year—five times—and pass more targeted policies to help finish the fight and get the American people their jobs, their schools, their lives, and their country back.

A number of Senate Republicans went to the White House just days after President Biden was sworn in, proposing we continue the streak of overwhelming bipartisanship that has designed the COVID-19 response all this time. Our Democratic colleagues said no; they wanted to go it alone. And when you look at their partisan bill, you can certainly see why.

Less than 9 percent of their massive proposal would go to the core healthcare fight against COVID-19. Listen to this: Less than 1 percent goes to vaccinations.

You see, they had to leave room for all the completely unrelated, leftwing pet priorities, like sending \$350 billion to bail out long-mismanaged State and local governments, multiple times the expert estimate of COVID needs; things like massive expansion and ObamaCare subsidies that would disproportionately benefit wealthier people; things like handcrafted tweaks to Medicare so it pays more money to just three States: Rhode Island, New Jersey, and the President's home State of Delaware. You might call it a special kick-back for the Acela Corridor.

They had to make room to bankroll things like underground rail in Silicon Valley, upgrading a bridge from New York to Canada, and giving Planned Parenthood access to taxpayer money meant to rescue mom-and-pop Main Street businesses.

Sadly, the parts that actually do relate to the pandemic aren't much better. At the same time that Democrats refuse to follow the science on in-person schooling, they want to pass a massive new set of deluxe benefits for Federal Government employees, including 15 weeks of paid vacation for folks whose children have the option—just the option—of virtual or even hybrid learning.

They want to keep schools closed and then pay a special bonus only to parents who are Federal employees because—because their schools are closed.

Now, this isn't a recipe to safely reopen America. To the degree that it even addresses the pandemic, it is more like a plan to keep it shut down.

Mostly, it is just what Democrats promised almost a year ago: taking advantage of the crisis to check off unrelated liberal policies.

IRAN

Mr. McCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on another matter, we recently learned that Iran has balked at the prospect of direct nuclear negotiations with the United States and Europe. This sort of resistance and gamesmanship is nothing new. We have seen this before.

Iran has long flouted international restrictions on its nuclear program, played hide-and-seek with U.N. inspectors, and failed to disclose the full scope of its nuclear research. This happened before, during, and after the Obama administration's Iran deal.

Now, thanks to the firm approach taken by the Republican administration which restored much of the leverage President Obama had thrown away, President Biden inherited a much, much stronger negotiating position.

Let me make it clear. Republicans do not oppose nuclear diplomacy. We hope the administration will secure a better, stronger, and more lasting deal than President Obama's, but to do so, President Biden's team must avoid the mistakes of the JCPOA.

Here is how you do that: coordinate closely with the partners and allies who are most immediately threatened by Tehran; treat Congress as a partner to be consulted, not a problem to be managed; and, most importantly, don't give up any leverage for free.

Of course the mullahs are playing coy. They want concessions before they even come to the table. In December, after President Biden was elected, Iran's Parliament reaffirmed their intent to continue acting out if sanctions were not eased.

Well, I hope it is only the Iranians and not the administration's negotiators who need this reminder: Look, the United States holds all the cards. President Biden is the Commander in Chief of a superpower. There are no circumstances—none—in which Iran should get money for nothing. And there is no need to rush into the talks.

The administration should take care not to squander our upper hand just to spite the last administration, nor should President Biden's team discount the value of the growing regional unity against Iran that is embodied in the new Abraham Accords.

Every day, headlines remind the world of the threat Iran and its proxies pose to peace and security. For example, the Iranian journalist, Ruhollah Zam, was lured back to the region from Europe, kidnapped, and hanged after a sham trial just in December.

The Lebanese activist, Lokman Slim, was an outspoken critic of Hezbollah until he was shot dead in his car.

The regime has kept escalating its support of the Houthis rebels in Yemen, sending in deadlier, longer range weapons, and inciting terrorist threats.

The Houthis have escalated attacks on Yemen's neighbors, including in civilian areas, and launched a military offensive that jeopardizes the peace negotiations being undertaken by U.N. Special Envoy Martin Griffiths.

Just last week, an Israeli civilian shipping vessel pulled into port with gaping damage from a missile attack, and Tehran's pet militias in Iraq have fired rocket barrages against our own American diplomatic and military facilities. They are communicating to the Biden administration in the mullahs' preferred language: violence.

Like I said over the weekend, President Biden is right to respond to this threat by authorizing strikes against targets belonging to Iranian proxy groups—the right decision—and he is right to recognize the need for new binding and enforceable constraints on Iran's nuclear capabilities, but, ultimately, we need a comprehensive approach to confronting Iran. It must be built on bipartisan foundations to endure for administrations and Congresses yet to come.

To get there—to get there, the administration must continue to meet Iranian aggression from a position of strength and consult closely with Congress for the sake of our own security and that of our friends and partners in the Ayatollah's backyard.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Gina Marie Raimondo, of Rhode Island, to be Secretary of Commerce.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I have come to the floor, on several occasions now, to talk about this \$1.9 trillion spending bill that will be soon before this body.

I have talked about different parts of the bill on different occasions. I have talked about the mandates, the bailouts, and the billions and billions of dollars of spending completely unrelated to coronavirus. Now, these are all reasons enough to oppose this piece of legislation.

Today, I would like to talk about another problem that I see with the bill,

and that is that this bill would now subsidize health insurance far beyond what was ever imagined when the House and the Senate passed the Obama healthcare law—way beyond the subsidies ever envisioned in that.

One analysis shows that this bill would give a family of four making close to a quarter million dollars a year—family of four making close to a quarter million dollars a year—up to \$9,000 in free subsidies for healthcare.

Now, that is not four times the poverty level; that is almost four times the average income of a household in the United States.

You know, government aid is supposed to be for those who need it, people who can't make it on their own, but that has not been the focus of the Democrats with this legislation.

This legislation is not about coronavirus, not about coronavirus testing and vaccinations. They have already been paid for, so that someone who wants to get a test or get the vaccine, they get it. It was paid for previously. The vaccines are free. We don't need additional money to pay for the shot. We voted on that last year. It is the law of the land.

This new proposal, with these additional subsidies, is just going to get us this much closer to one-size-fits-all, socialized medicine.

Now, Democrats have realized for many years that the Obama healthcare law has failed America. They know it is unaffordable for working families. People understand that the copays are so high, the deductibles are so high that people who have been mandated to buy it found that they didn't really get any value for their money.

Many people I have talked to said, with ObamaCare, the premiums were so high it was actually higher than their mortgage at home.

Well, Republicans want to lower healthcare costs, actually the cost of care. Democrats seem to just want to raise what government pays.

And Democrats are also trying to pressure States to expand Medicaid. There are about a dozen States that have chosen not to expand Medicaid.

Now, I am a doctor. I know the importance of Medicaid. I know the importance of providing care for people who cannot care for themselves. Often, that is families, low-income families, pregnant women, patients with disabilities. You look at the original intent of Medicaid—huge value for the American people but not what they have seen with the ObamaCare expansion.

We should work together for these most vulnerable of individuals so that they can get the care that they need. Yet it is not what Democrats are doing with this proposal, not with the additional subsidies, not with the additional expansion of Medicaid. They are trying to bribe States—bribe States to give free care to able-bodied, working adults; not to people who were originally intended to be helped by Medicaid but for able-bodied, working adults.

Those are people who ought to be getting their health insurance through their job, through work. That is the best way this works for them, insurance that they can use without these extraordinarily high deductibles and copays that we see with ObamaCare. The contrast could not be clearer.

Republicans are offering the American people a stronger economy and opening schools. That is what we ought to be focusing on. Democrats and the healthcare law are subsidizing health insurance for the rich. It is astonishing. You wouldn't think it would be that way. It doesn't make sense. It is not coronavirus relief.

People need relief now. They want their kids back in school. They want to get back to work. They want to put the virus behind them. That is not what I see in this \$1.9 trillion bill that the Senate will soon be considering.

I think only 1 dollar out of 11 of this \$1.9 trillion bill actually goes to help get people back to work, kids back to school, focuses on the healthcare components of coronavirus.

The kids-back-to-school component, you say: Well, there is money to put kids back to school, but 95 percent of that money doesn't even start to get spent until 2022. The coronavirus crisis is going to be behind us by 2022.

We should be working together, targeting support for the American people who need it the most, not subsidizing people who don't actually need the subsidies.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Republican whip.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, Democrats continue to push forward with their partisan COVID legislation. The House of Representatives passed the Democrats' \$1.9 trillion partisan wish list on Saturday, and the Senate is expected to take it up later this week.

Just weeks after the President expressed his commitment to unity at his inauguration, he and his party are forcing through exclusively partisan legislation despite Republicans' clear willingness to negotiate. When it comes to Democrats' COVID bill, President Biden keeps asking, "What would you have me cut?"—as if there is no way anyone could dispute the necessity of anything in this legislation.

Well, as I said last week, I have some suggestions because this bill is rife with unnecessary and problematic provisions. Democrats are presenting this as a COVID relief bill, but a lot of this bill has little to do with responding to the pandemic. In fact, less than 10 percent of the bill is directly related to combating the COVID health crisis.

If President Biden would like to know what to cut, let me suggest starting with the bill's \$350 billion slush fund for States. Now, there is no question that COVID has placed additional pressure on States, which is why Republicans supported targeted funding for States in previous COVID legislation. But at this point, the vast majority of States are not in crisis.

A number of States actually saw higher tax revenues in 2020. The majority of States, including my home State of South Dakota, have the resources they need to weather the rest of the pandemic. Even if the Federal Government bailed out those States that are still struggling—some, at least partially, because of their own mismanagement—\$350 billion far exceeds the amount that would be needed. Democrats are simply providing a large and unnecessary giveaway to States with the distribution formula heavily weighted in favor of blue States.

Then there is the bill's funding for schools. Now, Republicans are committed to getting schools reopened so our kids can get back to the in-person learning that they need. It is why we voted for \$68 billion in COVID funding for K-12 schools last year. But right now, schools don't need additional funding. So far K-12 schools have spent just \$5 billion of the \$68 billion that we provided them. Yet the Democrats' bill would provide nearly \$129 billion in additional funding. And despite all that additional and unnecessary money, nothing—nothing—in the bill would require schools to actually reopen. Schools could collect this money while still depriving students of the benefits of in-person learning.

And another thing, Democrats are billing this legislation as a COVID relief bill and suggesting that it is providing urgently needed funding. Yet 95 percent of the funding for schools—95 percent—would be spent after this year. That is right. Just 5 percent of this "emergency funding" would be spent in 2021. The rest would be spent between 2022 and 2028. Are we really supposed to believe that money that would be spent in 2028—years after the pandemic is likely to be over—is somehow urgently needed COVID relief funding?

Well, I could go on for a while here with suggestions for what to cut in this bill. I am pretty sure that \$100 million for a Silicon Valley underground rail project doesn't have a lot to do with getting our country out of the COVID crisis. Or how about the \$1.5 million for a bridge in the Democratic leader's home State?

And then there is the \$86 billion bailout for multiemployer pension plans, billions—billions—for environmental policies, and a provision to ensure that Planned Parenthood and labor unions can apply for Paycheck Protection Program loans designed to help small businesses—I am not sure how far that will go toward helping our economy,

but it will certainly help build the coffers of some of Democrats' political allies.

If Democrats were really just focused on COVID relief, this would be a much smaller and targeted bill, but Democrats' ambitions were much larger than just addressing the COVID crisis. As a Democrat political operative famously said, "never allow a good crisis to go to waste."

Well, Democrats have taken that advice and are using the COVID crisis as cover for a whole list of partisan priorities with potentially very negative consequences. The Democrats' COVID bill runs a very real risk of overstimulating the economy, as evidenced by the large increase we have seen in money supply which could, among other things, drive up prices on the goods that Americans use every day—in other words, inflation. Even some liberal economists have sounded the alarm over the size of the Democrats' coronavirus legislation.

And then, of course, there is the danger posed by driving up our debt. We had to borrow a lot of money last year to meet the demands of the coronavirus crisis, and while it was money we needed to borrow, we need to be very aware of the fact that we added a substantial—substantial—amount to our already very large national debt. We need to be very careful about any additional borrowing and ensure that we are only borrowing what is absolutely necessary.

I think it goes without saying that the more that we borrow, the more debt we have to retire. If something negative happened on interest rates and interest rates normalized—went back to a more normal setting—the interest itself on that amount of debt would literally dwarf anything else we do in our budget, including defending the country.

And that, I believe, is a very, very real threat, because if you look at what is happening right now with the economy and with all the money that we have flooded out there so far and another \$2 trillion, if the Democrats have their way in this particular proposal, and all that money out there starts pushing up those costs and we start seeing inflation in the economy, it doesn't take very long for interest rates to go with it. In fact, they already are. If those interest rates start pushing up very quickly on the amount of debt that we are piling up, financing that debt—the amount of interest, the cost of interest on that debt—would be absolutely overwhelming and devastating to this country.

So we need to be very, very careful about any additional borrowing and ensure that we are only borrowing what is absolutely necessary. That means making sure that anything we do in terms of additional pandemic relief is targeted and fiscally responsible, and that does not include money for a bridge in New York or a taxpayer bailout for mismanaged States.

It is deeply disappointing that Democrats chose to turn their backs on bipartisanship. Republicans were ready to work with Democrats on additional targeted relief.

As I have pointed out before, the pandemic has been an issue on which, at least up until now, there has been very much bipartisan support. Last year, when Republicans were in the majority, we did five—five—coronavirus bills, all bipartisan, all done at the 60-vote threshold that governs most legislation that moves through the Senate in a cooperative way.

In this case, the Democrats are plowing forward, pushing this legislation in a very partisan way, and I think that is unfortunate given our history on this issue of bipartisanship and the importance of making sure that we are doing the right things on behalf of the American people to help them get through this pandemic.

Choosing to pursue a partisan process allows Democrats to stuff the bill with unnecessary spending and political payoffs, but that is not the way to help our country or our economy recover.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF GINA MARIE RAIMONDO

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to urge my colleagues to support President Biden's nominee to be Secretary of Commerce, the Governor of Rhode Island, Gina Raimondo.

Many people know that Governor Raimondo was the first woman to serve in that position in her State, and she has made tremendous impacts to that State at a time when it needed important leadership. So we are very excited that the President has nominated her for this position and that she will put those same skill sets to work here in Washington.

The mission of the Department of Commerce, at least according to its website, is to foster, promote, and develop foreign and domestic commerce. Well, I can tell you that she is going to inherit a big challenge because obviously our domestic economy is still reeling from the impacts of COVID-19, and certainly she needs to think about the continuing transition to a digital economy in an information age. The foreign economy that she also will be charged with trying to help and impact as it relates to the United States is certainly plagued by the same pandemic and the impacts of that.

So we are looking for someone who can come in and help, with private sector experience, to really move the agenda of this administration forward. For me, Governor Raimondo's private

sector experience really means a lot. She knows how to invest in new technologies and things that are going to help us grow jobs for the future, and she knows how to match up a workforce with those job opportunities that are also so critical as we move forward on many, many different policy issues that are going to usher in change.

As Governor, she invested in workforce training and matching workers with relevant small business experience, called her Rhode Island job initiative. The program served more than 1,700 employers and 11,000 people throughout the State. She was able to send her State's unemployment rates tumbling to a 30-year low simply by doing a really focused job of matching workforce training to the needs of those industries that were growing in her State. So I certainly appreciate the fact that she has that private sector experience in knowing where to invest and bringing people together, and she certainly created successful programs on matching the workforce for tomorrow.

But make no mistake, the Department of Commerce is going to have a very challenging role as we try to deal with the impacts of COVID-19. One of the most important responsibilities, I believe, will be dealing with the sectors most hard hit by the COVID pandemic.

I am glad that Governor Raimondo is a Governor of a coastal State because one of the most impacted industries, as we have seen, is the seafood industry, which has been affected greatly by COVID-19 since early January 2020 when the lockdowns in China and around the world impacted the seafood sector. U.S. seafood exports to China dropped by 31 percent by January of 2020 and 40 percent by February of 2020. Lobster, Dungeness crab, shellfish—everything was experiencing severe declines, and west coast fisheries have seen as much as a 40-percent drop in revenue.

Sustainable fisheries are important economic drivers in coastal communities. I know that Governor Raimondo gets that. She understands that commercial fishermen and the impacts they have will impact not just seafood processors, shipbuilding, and trade, but also our restaurant economy. Marine anglers took in more than 194 million fishing trips, which fueled our outdoor recreation and tourism economy.

So I am glad that Governor Raimondo, from a coastal State, is going to come to oversee some of those key functions at the Department of Commerce, particularly at NOAA, and harness the incredible data and information that help us manage these economies, that keep them safe and keep them focused on science. I know she understands that, as Secretary, she can use those good scientific Agencies within the Department of Commerce to better understand the impacts of climate and the impacts of COVID and what we can do.

We know in the State of Washington that just a little bit of science done at

the University of Washington helped us immensely in saving our shellfish industry. We now need to do more for fisheries across the United States. We need to invest in things that I call salmon infrastructure to keep—as we continue to grow our economy and continue to move forward on infrastructure, that we are also keeping ways to return salmon.

I think this is one of the most important things Governor Raimondo can do as Secretary of Commerce—restore the respect for the scientific process, the scientific community, and the important issues that are going to be at the heart of how our coastal economies are impacted by climate.

I have invited Governor Raimondo to take one of her first trips to the State of Washington to see exactly how our State has dealt with these fishery issues. I know that the Presiding Officer from California knows how important the seafood industry is and the impacts to our coastal communities because of climate as well. We need a leader in the Department of Commerce who is going to help us mitigate and adapt to those impacts.

I am also counting on Governor Raimondo to help us with our export economy, everything from our ports to farmers to aerospace. Exports mean jobs, and about one in four jobs in the State of Washington is related to trade.

Frankly, I think she is a departure from the last President and the last Commerce Secretary, Wilbur Ross. I think he and the President spent a lot more time shaking their fists at the world community than engaging them on policies that were really going to open up markets and help us move forward with getting our products in the door.

Ninety-six percent of the world's customers live outside of the United States, and prior to the COVID pandemic, half of the world's population had reached middle class. That means that is a big market, almost 4 billion people. U.S. exporters need to be able to reach those markets and to grow the U.S. economy and grow U.S. jobs.

We need to work with our allies, like Europe and Japan, to meet the real challenges we face from China. We need to expand U.S. exports in other fast-growing markets around Asia and South America and around the world. The Department of Commerce has a key role in promoting those exports and helping our companies enter new markets, and U.S. commercial service officials are on the frontlines of these issues around the globe.

I know Governor Raimondo understands the importance of this export market, and she understands that the Department of Commerce can play a very big role in it. I hope that she will get to work soon on working within the Biden administration to make this a big priority.

I also want to say that I know she is going to, on other science Agencies

within the Department of Commerce, play a critical role, everything from the National Institute of Science and Technology—a small Agency that doesn't get a lot of attention, but it is very consensus-based on standards and fostering growth in a number of industries that are so important to communications and manufacturing and public safety.

So I hope that she will use, again, her private sector experience in knowing where to invest in new technologies to help us continue to grow economies like the space economy that we have in the State of Washington. We are very proud that, as commercial space travel has started to be a major focus of the private sector, it has grown many businesses and many jobs in our State in that area, and we want to see it continue to grow.

But we need Governor Raimondo's leadership on the important policies that divide us on these issues. The U.S.-EU Privacy Shield agreement is such a negotiation. I know my colleague Senator WICKER, who has been very involved in these discussions and negotiations, knows exactly how important digital trade is, and Commerce is leading up these talks to resolve these disputes.

We must ensure the continued free flow of commercial data between the United States and Europe. A lot is at stake. The U.S. and EU digital trade is worth more than \$300 billion annually and includes more than \$218 billion in U.S. exports to Europe. Every business that exports or imports or has a presence in investment in the United States or Europe will face difficulties if we don't resolve these issues and barriers to cross-border data transfer.

So all of this is very big risk, and we want Governor Raimondo to get to work on this very quickly and help resolve these issues.

The free flow of data between the United States and Europe is critical to 5,000 tech companies in my State and more than \$2.8 billion of digital exports in our economy. So I am pretty sure that this is the same—as I said to the Presiding Officer, I know he gets how important digital trade is to the State of California and would like to see these issues addressed as well.

So these are very big challenges for the Department of Commerce and the next Commerce Secretary to basically make sure that the impacts of COVID are dealt with in our economy and to usher in a new era of an information age by making the right investments and depending on science to help our key coastal communities that also have been greatly impacted, using and harnessing the aspects of NOAA and really bringing in the type of leadership we need at the Department of Commerce to resolve our problems as a new digital age emerges here on an international basis and continue to allow our economy to grow. I know she is the right choice. I urge my colleagues to support her nomination.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this week our Democratic colleagues are striving to break Congress's perfect record of bipartisan pandemic relief. Last year, five relief packages were signed into law, each with overwhelming bipartisan support. No bill received fewer than 90 votes here in the Senate, and 1 even passed unanimously. The reason why these bills received such broad support is because they address the crisis at hand in a targeted manner; no controversial provisions or unrelated partisan priorities, just clear-cut relief for the American people.

As I said, the perfect record of commonsense, bipartisan relief packages will apparently end this week.

The bill our Democratic colleagues are preparing to bring to the Senate floor has been drafted by only one party. As you can imagine, that process lends itself to a sort of partisan Christmas tree decorating. Democrats have taken the framework of the COVID relief bill and added a range of liberal priorities that have absolutely nothing to do with COVID-19: a Silicon Valley subway system, a blank check for mismanaged union pension plans, a bridge from New York to Canada, and funding for climate justice.

It is no surprise that this bill passed the House on a strict party-line vote. But the COVID-19 relief label isn't fooling anybody. This is a partisan wish list that does more to advance a political agenda than to respond to the legitimate public health and economic needs of our country. That is why our Democratic colleagues have chosen to abuse the budget reconciliation process in order to make a law.

Based on the pricetag of this bill, you would think it was March 2020 all over again. Despite the fact that we have made serious headway in vaccinations, our economy is recovering by leaps and bounds, and all signs show we are moving toward that light at the end of the tunnel, our Democratic colleagues are prepared to spend another \$1.9 trillion of borrowed money. That is about half as much as all previous bills combined.

What is even more concerning than the cost is how the money is going to be spent. One great example is funding for education. So far, Congress has provided more than \$110 billion for K-12 education, including \$68 billion in the relief bill that was signed into law in December, just a couple of months ago. Schools in Texas have used this money to update air filtration systems, purchase personal protective equipment,

and implement regular disinfecting so students and teachers can safely return to the classroom. After all, we know in-person instruction is best for our children.

I have had sections of my State where at least a third of the lower income students don't have dependable access to broadband, much less the kind of supervision that they would need in order to continue their learning. Study after study has shown that kids have fallen behind while learning virtually, especially in foundational subjects like math and reading.

The learning deficit is even greater for students of color and those in high-poverty communities. One study found that, for math, White students began the school year about 1 to 3 months behind in learning while students of color were more likely to be 3 to 5 months behind. And the impact on our students isn't purely academic. As we know, there are serious mental, social, and emotional tolls to be paid as well.

We need our schools to open, and, of course, we need to do so safely. The experts tell us that not only is that possible, but it has already been done in States across the country. The Centers for Disease Control published a report in January that found: "There has been little evidence that schools have contributed meaningfully to increased community transmission." The lead author of that report affirmed that even in places with high infection rates, there is no evidence that schools will transmit the virus at a higher rate than the general community. In short, schools are not a breeding ground for COVID-19 as long as appropriate precautions are taken, and they can reopen safely.

The good news is there is already plenty of funding to make that happen. In December, the Centers for Disease Control estimated schools would need about \$22 billion to open safely. As of February 9, of the \$68 billion that was provided for K-12 schools in the combined relief packages, only about \$5 billion has been spent. So \$68 billion has been provided, and only \$5 billion has been spent.

Despite clear evidence that, one, kids are struggling with virtual learning; two, schools can safely reopen with the right precautions; and, three, that there is plenty of funding to help schools implement these measures, our Democratic colleagues are prepared to spend another \$130 billion for K-12 education without any sort of incentive or requirement for children to return safely to the classroom.

Sadly, many of our schoolchildren are coming up on the 1-year anniversary of their virtual learning. Unfortunately, there seems to be very little momentum for letting those students return to the classroom, and, unfortunately, by default, they are falling further behind.

Since most of the existing funds remain to be spent, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that

the bulk of spending of this new proposed funding would occur next year and beyond. In other words, this isn't an emergency relief bill designed to deal with the present need; this is about spending money in 2021, after which, hopefully, virtually everybody in the United States is vaccinated and we have established herd immunity.

Only \$6.4 billion would be distributed through September of this year, and the remaining \$122 billion would trickle out the door through not just 2021 but through 2028. That is, the majority of the education funding in the so-called and misnamed COVID-19 relief bill wouldn't even be touched until the pandemic has been put in the rearview mirror.

Now, I have advocated for funding to help schools prepare for a safe return to the classroom, and, of course, the experts, as I said, have told us that more than enough funding is already available to make that happen. So I ask: What is the rationale for asking the taxpayers to foot another \$130 billion bill if there is no need for that funding in the first place? And I would add to that, this is not money that actually exists. This will be money borrowed from future generations that is added to the deficit and to our debt. There is certainly no excuse to ram this and a range of other partisan priorities through Congress without the support of a single Republican.

It was January 20 when I thought that President Biden gave a very eloquent and appropriate speech at his inauguration, talking about the need for the Nation to heal, for the divisions to heal, and for unity, but doing this partisan reconciliation bill when there is no demonstrated need for this deficit spending is not healing the divisions in our country or promoting unity.

Saturday will mark 1 year since the first COVID-19 response bill was signed into law. Since then we have, tragically, lost more than a half million Americans; families have struggled with job losses; small businesses have closed their doors; and children have fallen further and further behind.

The list of hardships endured over the past year is long indeed, but now our colleagues across the aisle are trying to capitalize on that pain by passing the so-called and misnamed COVID-19 relief bill that does more to advance partisan goals than to bring an end to this national nightmare. It does nothing to get our kids back in school or our American workers back on the job.

It doles out taxpayer dollars for favored infrastructure projects—these are colloquially called earmarks—like the bridge in the majority leader's home State of New York and a subway system in the Speaker's home State of California. What do those have to do with COVID-19? Where is the emergency there? Why should we borrow money from future generations to fund these infrastructure projects that have nothing to do with the pandemic?

We can deal with infrastructure, and we should, going forward, but opportunistically exploiting the public's concern about COVID-19 in order to fund these infrastructure projects in New York and California is simply inexcusable.

(Mr. LUJAN assumed the Chair.)

Only 1 percent of the funding in this massive \$1.9 trillion bill goes toward vaccination efforts. We all understand that vaccinating the American people is the key for ending this crisis. So far—and I am sure I am a day or so behind—a couple of days ago, we vaccinated 68 million people—68 million vaccinations, perhaps. Some of them involved two shots. And we are vaccinating people at the rate of 3 million shots a day. That is really, really encouraging. But only 1 percent of the funding in this \$1.9 trillion bill goes toward that eventual key to unlocking the future.

As I said, every penny that is spent on pandemic response is borrowed from our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren. Somebody is going to have to pay the money back—not us, not now, apparently. We are going to borrow the money, add to deficits and debt.

As Larry Summers and others have said, we are even risking inflation by throwing so much money into the economy so quickly, at a time when it is growing at more than 4 percent a year. And we are not, if this effort is successful, spending this money responsibly. Being responsible means doing what is needed—no more, no less—to bring this pandemic to an end and get this country back on its feet.

I think this bill is a shameful waste of taxpayer dollars. And it is outrageous that it is entitled the COVID-19 relief bill when so little of this bill actually deals with the pandemic. As we say, where I come from, if you put lipstick on a pig, it is still a pig.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. President, I didn't know our colleague from New Mexico was going to be the Presiding Officer now, but being our next-door neighbor, maybe he will appreciate a little short speech about Texas Independence Day.

One hundred eighty-five years ago, on March 2, 1836, Texas adopted its Declaration of Independence from Mexico. This happened in the context of a struggle that perhaps is best remembered by the Battle of the Alamo, which laid some of the groundwork to Texans—or as they called themselves back then, Texians—eventual victory.

I always remind people that virtually everybody died at the Battle of the Alamo. It was actually the Battle of San Jacinto that won the war. But just 1 week shy of this momentous day, a 26-year-old lieutenant colonel in the Texas Army named William Barrett Travis and his fellow soldiers were outnumbered nearly 10 to 1 by the forces of the Mexican dictator, Antonio López de Santa Anna. Colonel Travis wrote a letter that has arguably become the most famous document in Texas history.

Here in the Senate, both Republicans and Democrats from Texas, have had the honor of reading that letter every year since 1961, when then-Senator John Tower began that tradition.

So, today, I would like to express my gratitude for these Texas patriots, many of whom would go on to serve in the U.S. Congress, including Sam Houston, whose Senate seat I am honored to occupy, and it is my great honor to read the Travis letter here on the Senate floor.

The letter was addressed “To the People of Texas and All Americans [Around] the World.”

Fellow citizens & compatriots—I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man—The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion. Otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, & our flag still waves proudly from the walls—I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch—The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country—Victory or Death.

Signed:

William Barrett Travis, Lt. Col. Comdt.

As I said, in the battle that ensued, all 189 defenders of the Alamo gave their lives, but they did not die in vain. In fact, we Texans might not be around if it weren't for them. We might still be part of Mexico.

The Battle of the Alamo bought precious time for the Texas revolutionaries, allowing General Sam Houston to maneuver his army into position for a decisive victory, as I said, in the Battle of San Jacinto.

For 9 years, the Republic of Texas thrived as a nation. That is the reason we fly our flag at the same height as the U.S. flag, unlike other States. But then in 1845, we were annexed to the United States as the 28th State.

Every single day, I am honored to represent the people of my State here in the U.S. Senate, an opportunity that would not be possible without the sacrifices made by brave men like William Barret Travis 185 years ago.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I would thank my colleague from Texas for sharing the Texas letter with us again this year. It is always inspiring to hear those words, to remember the sacrifices that were made in Texas. It reminds us all of the sacrifices that are made daily across this country by people who love this country and stand for its unity.

Thank you, Mr. President, to my colleague from Texas.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. President, I come to the floor today because the Senate will likely

vote soon on the Biden stimulus bill. I think all of us in this Chamber agree that we want to get relief to the American people. That was our objective when we passed the CARES Act last year, which allocated \$2.2 trillion for the relief effort. It was our objective when we passed four other COVID relief bills in 2020—and these brought the total up to \$4 trillion. All of these measures were the result of bipartisan cooperation and negotiations—Democrats and Republicans working together.

But right now, the President and congressional Democrats are pushing a completely partisan product through a totally partisan process to promote their progressive agenda. They call it the American Rescue Plan, and the price tag is \$1.9 trillion, more than double what we spent after the financial crisis starting in 2008.

When combined with the five COVID packages we have already enacted, the total cost to the American taxpayers would be close to \$6 trillion, more than the GDP of every country other than China and the United States. And as of the end of January, hundreds of billions of dollars from these bills has yet to be spent.

December's relief bill dedicated \$284 billion to the Paycheck Protection Program, but only a quarter of those funds had been obligated. That same bill provided \$20 billion for Economic Injury Disaster Loans, none of it had been spent by February 1. The same is true of the CARES Act spending for community planning programs, for which hundreds of millions of dollars remain unspent. Over 90 percent of these bills' combined funding for mental health programs was sitting idle as of late January as well.

The White House calls this bill “emergency legislative package to fund vaccinations, provide immediate, direct relief to families bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 crisis, and supporting struggling communities.”

Each of these things is important, and support for them should absolutely be part of any package we pass. But when you look somewhere other than the White House website to find out what is actually in this bill, you see that many parts of it don't belong in a package that is meant to help us recover from our fight against this virus.

Let us start with what will make the biggest difference for working families: the direct payments to individual Americans. For months, I have supported sending these checks. I went on the record in December to say that people are hurting and that we should help them with more aid in the form of direct payments.

I think these payments are a good idea, but they should be targeted to those who truly need them, not sent to people who haven't been affected in the same way as the millions of Americans who have lost their jobs.

If this once-in-a-century pandemic hasn't put you out of work at one point

or another, you have been lucky. But this plan would give you a check even if you have never lost your job and struggled to pay your bills. That is not right.

This administration had time to work with Republicans to make sure those who need help get it. They didn't do that. Instead, people who never lost their job get a check. People who were never furloughed get a check. And financially stable families who earned as much as \$200,000 last year—well, they still get a check too.

If so many Americans are hurting, as we all know they are, our only focus should be getting this aid into their hands, not using their insecurity as a chance to pass a bunch of wish list items from this progressive agenda.

The White House wants Congress to spend billions of dollars on things that no COVID aid bill should be addressing. Many other Senators have expressed similar concerns. We believe that every cent of any COVID relief bill needs to go toward recovery from the effects of COVID on families and on communities.

The new administration has a chance to show that they really are interested in “bipartisanship” and “unity”—two words President Biden uses just about every day. They could prove that today by reaching out to Republicans in good faith, but, so far, any effort by the administration to do so has only been to provide an appearance of working together, not to make any actual progress on any kind of bipartisan product. Instead, they are focusing on filling this package with progressive priorities.

So let's take a look at some of the items on that list: giving \$30 billion to public transit authorities, even though President Biden only asked for \$20 billion and several major Agencies have said the December relief bill would get them through at least until summer; spending \$50 million on family planning programs that wouldn't have Hyde protections, meaning that our tax dollars would pay for elective abortions; allowing Planned Parenthood to receive the small business funding from the Paycheck Protection Program; dedicating another \$50 million to the troubling vague goal of “combating the climate crisis”; sending \$12 billion overseas in aid—this does not belong in a domestic COVID response bill—and spending over \$100 million on a subway system near Speaker PELOSI's district in the Bay area. I will leave it up to my Democratic colleagues to explain how expanding a subway in Northern California would help all Americans “build back better” in this pandemic. So far, they are silent.

This is supposed to be an emergency rescue plan for the Americans who have been hit hardest by COVID, but, instead, the Biden stimulus plan doesn't make any of the tough decisions we need to make, and it uses Americans' hard-earned tax dollars as a blank check.

This proposal also pays lipservice to the importance of getting students back into the classroom, while asking this body to vote for things that would do exactly the opposite.

Even though almost \$70 billion of the funds dedicated to schools in December's relief bill still hasn't been spent, this American Rescue Plan would give them nearly \$170 billion more. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle say this money is necessary for a majority of K-8 schools to safely reopen in the President's first 100 days, but their bill would reserve 95 percent of that new money for the years 2022 to 2028. How does that help families today who want their kids to get back to school? They want them back in school now; so how does it help?

This bill goes even further than that. It would treat schools that choose to open and schools that remained closed the same way, which does nothing to incentivize them to get their kids back in classrooms.

This plan would also give \$350 billion to States, cities, and localities. A big chunk of that money will be used to bail out States like New York and California, which have kept people away from their jobs and their children out of schools for months on end.

Even worse, this bill tallies States' and localities' level of funding based on raw unemployment numbers, not their unemployment rate. That would punish both red and blue States that have handled this pandemic well. It leaves behind States like mine—like Nebraska—which has the lowest unemployment rate in the country because we have succeeded in balancing safety and reopening where other States have failed. It would also hurt Minnesota, Vermont, and New Hampshire—three blue States that have kept their unemployment numbers low.

When you look under the hood, this bill is more about passing that partisan wish list than getting the United States through the worst public health crisis that we have faced in over a century.

At best, the name "American Rescue Plan" is misleading. At worst, it is deceptive.

I stand ready to work with the administration and my Democratic colleagues in Congress to address these issues and to give Americans the help they need in a targeted, reasonable, and productive way. We did that with the CARES Act, and we could do it again if our colleagues on the other side are willing.

That is the way the Senate is supposed to work—in a bipartisan way. It is how we reach consensus and deliver the policies that the American people need and that the American people deserve.

I know I share the sentiments of many of my colleagues when I say that I am disappointed in how this process has been conducted. Without an effort to compromise and to make major changes in the stimulus package, I will be voting no.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate Texas Independence Day. One hundred and eighty-five years ago today, on March 2, 1836, the Republic of Texas declared our independence from the nation of Mexico. Fifty-nine delegates who adopted the Texas Declaration of Independence on that day gathered at Washington-on-the-Brazos. The delegates adopted a declaration, modeled in significant parts after the Declaration of Independence of the United States.

The declaration decried the arbitrary acts of oppression and tyranny from the Mexican Government under the dictator General Santa Anna. In particular, it noted that that government had "ceased to protect the lives, liberty, and property of the people from whom its legitimate powers are derived." And the Texans signing that declaration sought to protect their rights of free speech, their rights to keep and bear arms, and their rights of freedom of religion.

Signing that declaration commenced the Texas Revolution, our battle for independence, where we won independence from the nation of Mexico. And for 9 years, the State of Texas became the Republic of Texas, an independent nation. That, of course, ceased in 1845, when we joined the United States. And today, we celebrate that spirit of independence that is still found throughout all 29 million Texans.

NOMINATION OF GINA MARIE RAIMONDO

Mr. President, I rise today to express concern over President Biden's nomination of Governor Gina Raimondo to lead the Department of Commerce.

We are a year into a deadly pandemic that originated in Wuhan, China. The Chinese Communist Party censored and disappeared doctors and journalists who were trying to tell the truth about how the coronavirus was spreading, and the Chinese Communist Party lied to the world about the nature of the virus. Over 2½ million people worldwide have died, including over a half million Americans.

The Chinese Communist Party's lies and censorship and propaganda didn't stop with the pandemic. They pervade everything the Chinese Communist Party does. Many of us are increasingly concerned that China is gaining access to American secrets using non-traditional all-of-government—or even all-of-nation—approaches to espionage against the United States and our allies. That includes using companies like Tencent and Huawei, which masquerade as telecom companies when they are, in fact, government espionage operations. This is deeply troubling and dangerous.

China is, in my judgment, the greatest long-term geopolitical threat to the United States for the next century. Presidents in both parties have be-

lieved for decades that the United States could somehow turn China from a foe to a friend through trade and diplomacy or that allowing China into rules-based institutions would turn China into a rules-based country. Instead, sadly, the opposite has happened.

The United States, of course, can't sever all commerce with one of the biggest economies in the planet, but we must recognize China for the threat it poses to our national security. To counter the threat that China poses, we should do four things:

No. 1, we should protect ourselves from Chinese espionage and interference.

No. 2, we should insulate the supply lines of our critical resources from China, including by bringing them back to the United States.

No. 3, we should insulate all commerce from enabling the Chinese Communist Party's human rights abuses, including their systematic pattern of torture, murder, and genocide.

And, No. 4, we should vigorously compete to secure our interests.

On the first point, one important thing the Department of Commerce does is maintain an Entity List, which is a list of foreign parties and companies that engage in activities contrary to American national security interests. When a foreign company is put on the Entity List, they are barred from acquiring American technology.

In 2019, I led an effort to add to the list of companies, and in 2019 and in 2020, the Trump administration added several Chinese technologies companies to the Entity List.

When Governor Raimondo came before the Commerce Committee in January, I asked her if she would keep those Chinese technologies companies on the Entity List. She refused to make that commitment. In fact, she wouldn't even commit to keeping Huawei on the Entity List, which is unabashedly an espionage agency of the Chinese Communist Party.

In questions for the record, I gave Governor Raimondo a second chance to clearly and explicitly answer these questions, and yet she still refused.

Similarly, the Governor provided vague nonanswers or no answers at all in response to questions for the record on her ethics problems and her conflicts of interest as Governor.

As my colleagues know, nominees will never be more engaged, more transparent, or more forthcoming than during their confirmation process. That Governor Raimondo has refused to be any one of these speaks volumes to how she would act if confirmed as Secretary.

The fact is that there has been a rush to embrace the worst elements of the Chinese Communist Party in the Biden administration, and that includes Governor Raimondo. That is why I placed a hold on her confirmation, and that is why I will be voting not to confirm her to lead the Department of Commerce.

Governor Raimondo's nomination is part of a pattern. So far, every action, every nomination that we have seen from the nascent Biden administration, insofar as it concerns China, has lessened the scrutiny, has lessened the sanctions, has lessened the pressure on communist China. We are seeing a steady and systematic embrace of communist China, and that is dangerous. That is dangerous for our nation. It is foolhardy.

I recognize that there is a lot of pressure from Big Business and Big Tech to get in bed with China. That is profoundly contrary to American interests.

Now, we are just about 6 weeks into the Biden Presidency, and the Biden administration has already been keen on lifting the restrictions on Huawei since the very first week. Where will we be 6 months from now, a year from now?

Prohibiting the use of platforms like Huawei and safeguarding American technology from being exploited by Chinese espionage infrastructure are commonsense measures to protect American national security.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, the understanding of the threat posed by communist China was more limited. It was more limited in Washington, where both Democrats and Republicans mistakenly believed China was our friend, and it was more limited internationally.

For 8 years in the Senate, I had been calling out the threat posed by Communist China—sometimes a lonely position in this town. But as events transpired the last year and the world saw the systematic pattern of lies, deception, and death coming from the Chinese Communist Government, eyes have been open, and the severity of the threat has been underscored.

Before this pandemic, our ally, the United Kingdom, was moving forward with plans to allow Huawei to install significant telecommunications infrastructure in the UK. The U.S. Government had vigorously urged the UK not to go down that road, that it would open up the United Kingdom to espionage from the Chinese Government. The United Kingdom is one of the members of the Five Eyes intelligence sharing network, a network of our closest allies where we share our most sensitive, our most important, our most confidential national security secrets.

I had the opportunity to sit down with Nigel Farage on a podcast I host and to talk about Brexit, to talk about Europe, but also to talk about Huawei and the threat from China. As I said to Nigel on the podcast, as much as we love the Brits, as valuable a friend as the UK is to the United States, if the UK went forward with allowing Huawei to install significant telecom infrastructure in its country, we might have to reassess the UK's participation in the Five Eyes security network. As I put it then, "four eyes are better than six eyes."

Well, I am grateful to say that following the coronavirus pandemic, the United Kingdom reconsidered its decision. It saw the threat of Communist China and Huawei, and it stepped back from the brink. That was the right thing to do, and it did so in response to considerable pressure from the U.S. Government.

I very much hope that this pattern we are seeing of the Biden administration embracing Communist China will not reverse that pressure, will not lighten up on our allies and tacitly encourage them to move forward with Huawei to allow the espionage architecture to be put in place their nations. That would render America more vulnerable. It would render our allies more vulnerable. It would render the world more vulnerable.

It would have been a very simple matter for Governor Raimondo to commit to keeping Huawei on the Entity List. It would have been a very simple matter for Governor Raimondo to commit to keeping the Chinese technology companies that I urged be added to the list, keeping them on the list. She refused to do so repeatedly.

As I said, this appears to be a part of a pattern of a systematic decision to embrace Communist China. If that is indeed the direction the Biden administration is going, I hope that Members of both parties who have seen the threat posed by Communist China will urge the President, will urge the Cabinet, will urge this administration: Stop the embrace of communist China. Defend the interests of the United States of America.

Because she was not willing to make these commitments, I will be voting against the confirmation of Governor Raimondo, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold his request?

Mr. CRUZ. I withhold my request.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:34 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SINEMA).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

VOTE ON RAIMONDO NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Raimondo nomination?

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 84, nays 15, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 70 Ex.]

YEAS—84

Baldwin	Grassley	Paul
Bennet	Hassan	Peters
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Portman
Blunt	Hickenlooper	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Risch
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Braun	Inhofe	Rosen
Brown	Johnson	Rounds
Burr	Kaine	Sanders
Cantwell	Kelly	Schatz
Capito	King	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Lankford	Sinema
Casey	Leahy	Smith
Cassidy	Lee	Stabenow
Collins	Lujan	Sullivan
Coons	Manchin	Tester
Cornyn	Markey	Thune
Cortez Masto	Marshall	Tillis
Crapo	McConnell	Toomey
Daines	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Moran	Warnock
Ernst	Murkowski	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Fischer	Murray	Wicker
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Wyden
Graham	Padilla	Young

NAYS—15

Barrasso	Hawley	Sasse
Cotton	Hoeben	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cruz	Lummis	Shelby
Hagerty	Rubio	Tuberville

NOT VOTING—1

Blackburn

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 13, Cecilia Elena Rouse, of New Jersey, to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

Charles E. Schumer, Sherrod Brown, Tina Smith, Tammy Baldwin, Thomas R. Carper, Sheldon Whitehouse, Patrick J. Leahy, Brian Schatz, Christopher A. Coons, Jack Reed, Michael F. Bennet, Debbie Stabenow, Chris Van Hollen, Ron Wyden, Martin Heinrich, Bernard Sanders, Edward J. Markey, Cory A. Booker.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Cecilia Elena Rouse, of New Jersey, to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 94, nays 5, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 71 Ex.]

YEAS—94

Baldwin	Hagerty	Portman
Barrasso	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Hawley	Risch
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Romney
Blunt	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Booker	Hirono	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Brown	Inhofe	Sasse
Burr	Johnson	Schatz
Cantwell	Kaine	Schumer
Capito	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Cardin	Kennedy	Shaheen
Carper	King	Shelby
Casey	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cassidy	Lankford	Smith
Collins	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Lee	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lujan	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Thune
Cramer	Markey	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Van Hollen
Daines	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warnock
Durbin	Moran	Warren
Ernst	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wicker
Fischer	Murray	Wyden
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Young
Graham	Padilla	
Grassley	Peters	

NAYS—5

Cotton	Paul	Tuberville
Lummis	Scott (FL)	

NOT VOTING—1

Blackburn

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas are 94, the nays are 5.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Cecilia Elena Rouse, of New Jersey, to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, a month after Janet Yellen made history as the first woman to serve as Secretary of the Treasury, today we are about to confirm another woman to step into a leading role in our economy, Cecilia Rouse.

When she came before the Banking and Housing Committee, Dr. Rouse's knowledge of our economy and her passion for service and her commitment to

the people who make this country work were obvious to all of us—to the Presiding Officer who is on the committee, to Republicans, to Democrats alike.

After a year when Black Americans have endured so many painful reminders of the yawning gap between the promise of our founding ideals, it is meaningful that our committee's first nomination—our first nomination committee hearing in the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee—consider the nomination of two outstanding Black women who will take leading roles in our economic recovery: Dr. Rouse, and my Congresswoman, my Congresswoman in Cleveland, MARCIA FUDGE.

This matters on so many levels. It is important for our future that little girls, including Black and Brown girls, see themselves in our leaders, from the Vice President to our economic leaders. It matters because of the perspectives and the life experiences these two women—these two Black women—bring to these jobs.

Dr. Rouse has family ties in my State, roots deep into the Mahoning Valley and Youngstown, and a real understanding of the people who make this country work—all people.

The Council of Economic Advisers will also play a key role both in helping our economy recover and in building a better economic system out of this pandemic. Dr. Rouse is exactly whom we need at the helm. She will help direct our Nation's economic policy to put Americans back to work at better jobs with higher wages.

Millions of Americans are still out of work. Those job losses have disproportionately fallen on low-wage workers, Black and Brown workers, and women. Three million women—three million women have been forced out of the paid labor force. At the same time, essential workers are risking their health to go to work, while corporations still refuse, in far too many cases, to pay them a living wage.

The minimum wage hasn't been raised in 14 years. Year after year—year after year, Republicans in this Senate and the White House profess to care about the working people in the heartland of this country, but they refuse to give them a raise while they funnel tax cuts to the CEOs.

My first speech in this body was in January 2007. Sitting in the chair that Senator SINEMA now sits in was Illinois freshman Democrat, Barack Obama. He was not even running for President at that point. Since we last raised the minimum wage, he was President 8 years and out of office for more than 4. That is how long. So while Republicans refuse to give raises, they funnel huge tax cuts to CEOs.

It is part of the same corporate elite mindset that treats American workers as expendable instead of treating them as essential to our country's success. And we have seen the results: The stock market goes up, corporate profits

or executive compensation explodes, and wages stagnate, and the middle class continues to shrink.

Building Back Better—that is what Joe Biden is about, building back. That is what Cecilia Rouse is all about. Building Back Better means taking on that system. It means creating an economy, creating an economy where hard work pays off for everyone, no matter who you are, what kind of work you do, with a growing middle class that everyone can aspire to; everyone has a chance to join.

This won't be the first time Dr. Rouse has helped us weather a crisis. She served on the Council of Economic Advisers in 2009, after the George Bush recession, during the Great Recession.

Dr. Rouse has spent her career focusing on workers and ensuring that this economy works for everyone. Her expertise, her leadership will guide this administration and Congress, as we get to work not only to recover from this pandemic but to build a better—just a better economy for the future.

For too long, American workers haven't had anyone on their side in the White House. That ends now. We saw it on Sunday night, with the strongest statement from a President of the United States in support of union organizing that we have seen in my lifetime. We see it in President Biden's choice of Dr. Rouse to help guide our economy and guide this rescue.

Cecilia Rouse understands we have the power to change how the economy works. It rewards work instead of rewarding wealth. We create more jobs at middle-class wages. We expand economic security and opportunity for everyone. And we create a better system that honors the dignity of all workers.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to roll.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S.J. RES. 7

Mr. LEE. Madam President, the Minor Consent for Vaccinations Amendment Act of 2020 is a measure adopted by the District of Columbia that would allow for children 11 years old and older to consent on their own, without their parents' knowledge or acquiescence or consent, to being vaccinated. They could receive a vaccine, contrary to the wishes of their parents or without them even knowing.

Young children don't necessarily know their own medical histories, their families' medical histories, potential allergies, nor do they have the adult judgment that is sometimes needed to make an informed decision as to consent for a particular medical procedure or treatment or even vaccination, which is exactly why parents make healthcare decisions on behalf of their own children.

Parents play the most important role in caring for the health of their children. Moms and dads are at the heart of their children's education and care, and it is crucial that they be able to make decisions about what kind of healthcare is best for them and about the timing of it and certainly that they be not only able to make the decision but also that they be aware of it in the first place.

The DC legislation that I referenced a moment ago goes so far as to hide children's vaccinations from their own parents, even after it has occurred, in other words. This information is withheld from the parents. It requires doctors, nurses, insurance companies, and even public schools to conceal their children's vaccinations from their parents.

It would also fly in the face of parents who may have religious beliefs causing them to object to vaccinations or who have made the decision for their children to forgo, either on a long-term basis or for a particular period of time, certain vaccinations—like the HPV vaccine, for example.

Furthermore, it would pave the way for allowing children to consent to other types of medical treatment without parental knowledge down the road, other treatments in other contexts that might have long-lasting, significant impacts on their health.

Look, as a parent myself and as someone who, as a parent, believes in vaccinations, I think it is imperative to realize that regardless of how you, in particular, feel about vaccines, even if, like me, you support the idea of being vaccinated and having your children vaccinated, remember that there are those who don't share those views, and remember that separate and apart from their views, there are some people whose family histories and personal medical experience might reveal some tendency toward a reaction, an idiosyncratic reaction that could be harmful. In some circumstances the timing of a vaccination can also be important. These are all considerations that a parent ought to be able to make, and in every jurisdiction that respects the independence of parental rights, these ought to be decisions that are made by parents and certainly ought not be decisions made by children as young as 11 years old without their parents' consent or even their knowledge.

In light of these concerns, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S.J. Res. 7 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the joint resolution be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CARPER. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I respect the views of my colleagues. I respect the views of this colleague especially, and he knows that. We don't always agree on everything or even, maybe, most things, but I think it is important we be able to find ways to disagree without being disagreeable.

I understand that the senior Senator from Utah is here today because he disagrees with a particular policy. That is certainly his right, his prerogative. He is welcome to register his views, as we all are.

For instance, we have heard our friend from Utah defend the principles of limited government and our system of federalism on this floor many times. I have heard him and other colleagues of ours argue with passion that the Federal Government should not be in the business of interfering in State or local matters.

Yet here we are, as our Republican colleagues try to tell a local government, once again, what it can and cannot do. The Senator from Utah has introduced a resolution that seeks to overturn a law passed by the duly elected council of the District of Columbia.

I am not here to debate the merits of this law. After all, I was not elected by the people living in the District of Columbia. In fact, no one, as far as I know, in this room was elected by the people of the District of Columbia.

But the reason that these Senators have the ability to try to overturn a law passed by the local DC government is that the over 700,000 individuals who call the District of Columbia home continue to be denied full representation in Congress—in fact, any representation here in the U.S. Senate.

Under current law, Congress reviews all legislation passed by the DC Council before it can become law. The District of Columbia is not allowed to even control its own budget. The Mayor of DC cannot even deploy the men and women of the National Guard in case of emergency, a right every other State executive can utilize. If this were the case for any other State or local government, there would rightfully be an outcry from the citizens of that State or local government.

I don't believe that our colleague from Utah would take kindly to me or any of us in this body telling the city council in, say, Salt Lake City—a city with just under 200,000 residents—what laws they could or could not pass, and he would be right. He would be right. Luckily, the people of Salt Lake City have a Senator who has come to Washington, speaks his mind on the Senate floor, and votes to advance the interests of not just Salt Lake City citizens but the rest of Utah as well. I think that is really, in its essence, all that the people of Washington, DC, are looking for.

For me, the issue of DC statehood is not a Democratic or Republican issue;

it is a simple issue of basic fairness. For a Nation whose founding mantra—"no taxation without representation"—inspired the longest running experiment in democracy, we should all be concerned that today more than 700,000 tax-paying Americans, over two-thirds of whom are people of color, continue to be denied a vote here in this body.

Our Nation's Capital is home to more than just monuments and museums. It is a home to American families who go to work, to Americans who start businesses, to Americans who pay their taxes, to Americans who serve our country in times of war and peace, and to Americans who are still denied representation. Again, it is home to veterans and servicemembers who have signed up to protect our freedoms, who have risked their lives for our country and are still denied the ability to have a say in our Nation's future. It is home to the hundreds of Capitol Police officers who come to work every day in the Nation's Capital to keep us safe and are still denied a vote in the very institution they protect.

For generations, those who call the District of Columbia home have been denied the right to fully participate in our democracy, and that is why we are here today. That is why our Republican colleagues can call this vote to silence the decisions made by local leaders that DC residents have voted into office. That is why they can exercise this Federal overreach here today.

I said at the beginning of my remarks that my colleagues and I don't always agree on everything, but we do agree on quite a bit. But I strongly agree and want to associate myself with the words of Senator MIKE LEE in, I think it was 2018, just a couple of years ago. He said then:

We should allow each unique community to develop unique solutions according to the unique local preferences, and leave it at that.

Let me just repeat that.

We should allow each unique community to develop unique solutions according to unique local preferences, and leave it at that.

I could not agree more. I think it is incumbent upon all of us who care deeply for our democracy and the rights of all Americans to take up the cause of our fellow citizens in the District of Columbia and use our voices to call out this historic injustice and finally right this wrong.

With that, I stand opposed to Senator LEE's joint resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CARPER. Objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I appreciate the thoughtful words of my friend and distinguished colleague, the Senator from Delaware. I am grateful anytime someone is willing to recognize

that I have been a consistent champion of federalism and localism, self-rule.

He and I agree that those principles are important. My friend from Delaware, being a former Governor himself, understands the sovereignty of the States and the need to respect their judgment.

This is a different circumstance here than that. This would absolutely be inappropriate for us, in any other circumstance, to tell a State or any political subdivision of any State—a city, town, a county, any other subunit of one of our 50 sovereign States—it would be inappropriate for us to weigh in on a local policy issue like this. It is, in fact, part of our constitutional design that each State and each community within each State needs to be able to express itself and make its own decisions based on its own unique preferences.

Here is a very significant difference with respect to the District of Columbia. It has its own provision of the Constitution—in fact, its own clause in article I, section 8, known as the enclave clause. This provision, found in article I, section 8, clause 17, gives Congress exclusive legislative jurisdiction over what we now call the District of Columbia. It wasn't called that in 1787, when they wrote this. It hadn't yet been designed, created, but it described the area to be created out of land donated by one or more States, no more than 10 miles square that would serve as the seat of our national government.

There was an understanding the Founding Fathers had that the seat of government ought not be under the control of any single State, but rather it ought to be in a special status. To that end, the Founding Fathers put ultimate legislative jurisdiction in the hands of Congress, not in that district itself, not in the hands of the States that donated the land to create it, but in Congress.

Now, the DC Home Rule Act, of course, gives substantial authority to the DC City Council and Mayor. As it relates to this legislation, it gives the DC government 30 business days after the passage and enrollment of this legislation, and in that 30 business-day period, Congress has the ability to disapprove of that legislation, which would stop it from being implemented when it is set to take effect on March 18.

Let's remember what we are talking about here. We are talking about the most basic fundamental choice that a parent has relative to his or her child: the authority and the discretion to decide when, whether, how, and under what circumstances and what time certain medical procedures may be performed on the child. You might disagree with the medical judgment of a particular parent and at a particular moment, but I am not aware of any State that would make the decision on a statewide basis to take this choice away from parents and to say that a child as young as 11 years old could

make his or her own choice and not only deprive a child's parents from being able to make that decision but also be able to deprive that child's parents from ever even learning about it. These things are sometimes not without consequence.

Imagine, for example, a circumstance in which the parents are aware of some particular medical condition, a medical procedure that this child has recently had. Imagine circumstances in which a child's siblings or the child him or herself had previously reacted to a particular vaccination in a particular way or imagine a circumstance in which religious considerations come into play. Do we really want to deprive parents of the ability to make that decision?

I am not aware of any State legislature that would make that choice. I certainly hope they wouldn't. But regardless, and even though this would not be our choice, this would not be within our authority if it were not within the District of Columbia and, therefore, within our plenary legislative jurisdiction under the enclave clause to make this decision from Congress. It is our decision here because, at the end of the day, the DC government itself is acting on authority delegated to it by the Congress.

So whether you like it or not, whether you like, in the abstract, the idea of localism either as embodied in federalism or even more generally than that, you can't escape the fact that under our constitutional system, we are the lawmaker for DC, no less than any State's legislature is the legislative body for that State. If you choose not to decide here, you still have made a choice. You still have made a choice to approve of that legislative body stripping away critical protections, critical rights that parents have. We have made that decision not just because it sounds like the right thing to do, but anyone who has ever been a parent understands that it has to be the parent's choice. A parent has to be in a position of making these decisions and, at least, for crying out loud, be made aware of this. This takes away not only their authority or their rights but even their awareness of what has happened to their child.

So, yes, I understand the concerns of localism. They simply don't apply here.

Under our constitutional system, under the Constitution itself, the document to which we all have sworn an oath to uphold, protect, and defend, this is not a State decision.

To the extent it is a decision for the DC government, for the DC City Council, and Mayor, that is authority that we have delegated to the District, and it is authority that is ultimately ours. We are ultimately answerable to the people, to those who have elected us, to make sure that is exercised responsibly.

So if you don't like the fact that we are doing this—for that matter, if you don't like the policy of this, if you as a State lawmaker wouldn't be com-

fortable with this policy being adopted in your State—you have not only every right and every authority, but I believe you have a moral obligation to stand up to this piece of legislation. Do not let this kick in on March 18. This is wrong. It is not something we have to accept, and it is certainly not something that the Constitution even allows, much less compels.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from West Virginia.

TRIBUTE TO DONNA BOLEY

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, today I rise to speak on a couple of topics, but first, I want to take this opportunity to thank really an icon in our State, and that is West Virginia State Senate Pro Tempore Donna Boley. She is a good friend of mine, and she is now in her 10th term. She is the longest continuously serving member in our State's State senate. At one point in history, Donna Boley was the only Republican. She was the ranking member on every single committee and the lead Republican, as she was the only one in the early nineties.

I want to thank her for her service, for her service to our State, which began in 1985, and wish her all the best as she presides today—she is presiding today—over the West Virginia State Senate.

So, Donna, way to go. Really proud of you. You are a role model for every woman who is watching and certainly young girls as well.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. President, I also rise to join my colleagues to discuss the Democrats' so-called COVID-19 relief package.

Prior to this past round, Congress has been delivering much needed relief, as you know—five times since the beginning of this pandemic—with bipartisan support.

In this last month, my Republican colleagues and I put forth a targeted proposal, presented to President Biden in the Oval Office. He invited 10 of us over, and we had a great discussion. It wasn't just a plan, but it was a plan to work together, to be united and move forward in an area that we have had great bipartisan consensus.

Let's be clear. We don't disagree on the need for continued relief and resources, but it needs to be done in a targeted way. Throwing money randomly will not fix it, especially when some of these funds that are still being spent—that we speak of right now haven't been spent yet. And taking the opportunity to spend on favorite projects is not the intention of a COVID relief package.

In December of 2020—that wasn't that long ago, 2 months ago—we passed the most recent recovery efforts, which amounted to approximately \$900 billion in relief funds. President Biden's relief plan takes none of that into consideration. They don't take into full account a sufficient understanding that the impacts of that bill from just 2 months ago have yet to be felt. Instead, it force-feeds funds and radical

policy ideas into a framework under the guise of COVID relief.

Let's just take our schools, for example. Everybody is frustrated because our schools aren't open and our students are falling behind. Congress last year appropriated \$68 billion for K-12 schools, but of this amount, only \$5 billion of that—5 billion of the 68—has been spent so far. According to the Congressional Budget Office, of the almost \$129 billion for K-12 schools included in this Biden COVID relief plan, only \$6.4 billion of that is planned to be distributed through September of this year. The remaining \$122 billion will not go to schools until the fiscal years 2022 through 2028. Now, we are being sold this program because it is an emergency. Well, I don't know how you predict an emergency in the year 2028. This cannot possibly qualify as emergency spending.

Here are some of the other areas where funds have yet to be spent:

Of the \$13 billion provided in our December plan for our agriculture community, only \$11.5 billion—no, excuse me, \$11.5 billion of the \$13 billion has yet to be obligated. That is not even spent; that is obligated.

Roughly \$14 billion in appropriated funding for COVID testing has not yet been obligated, and that is an extremely important part, and that is—less than 10 percent of this plan are things like testing, vaccines, and therapeutics.

Twenty-one States have actually experienced revenue growth compared to 2019, 2020. Yet this bill expends \$350 billion to States. This money needs to be targeted. The parameters created in this category alone reward States that were more restrictive in their economic decisions and heavily weighted towards highly populated States. That is not my State. My friend here from Montana, that is not his State. And the parameters of this are so loose that I can't imagine what projects will be dreamed up to be spent on.

As of January 19, none of the \$27 billion provided by the Department of Transportation in December, 2 months ago, under the Consolidated Appropriations Act has been obligated. Yet there is more money in there for this as well.

Also important to note is that the President's plan includes many provisions that really have nothing to do with COVID relief—nothing—but this is a COVID relief package. From an \$86 billion bailout of union pensions to \$100 million—over \$100 million, actually—for a subway project in California, to funds provided to advance portions of President Biden's recent climate Executive order and environmental justice priorities, these are some of the items in here that have nothing to do with coronavirus relief. These extra wish list items make his plan more expensive and more partisan.

To make matters worse, my friends on the other side of the aisle have decided to do this in the most partisan way possible: reconciliation. Using this

process risks wasting millions of dollars without the standard procedures that we go through on the Appropriations Committee and other committees. This bill hasn't even touched a committee over here in the Senate. But it goes without the standard policy guardrails and provisions that, when we work together, we ensure that the money is put to its intended use. We are creating slush funds in the name of COVID relief.

Bottom line: This will be a fiscally wasteful product.

There are good things in here that we all agreed on that the 10 who went to the White House to talk about and many of us have provided in the last five bills.

Many Americans will be getting checks, and while I agree with this, all of this would be better in a bill that we agreed on and that we negotiated.

We are risking a potential economic recovery with continued massive spending. As I have said time and again in my 5-minute speech all over the State of West Virginia, we all agree on continued COVID relief. However, we need to do this in a targeted, fiscally responsible—and working together, like we have the last five times. Doing so allows us to effectively help individuals, families, and businesses that need help the most—and there are many out there that do, and they need it yesterday; we know that—while also considering what other impacts might be happening as we throw over a trillion extra dollars to unrelated COVID relief items.

With that, I am in opposition to the bill, in case you couldn't tell.

Now I see my friend from Montana is here, but I want to thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, well, I want to thank my colleague from West Virginia, Senator CAPITO, for clearly laying out her concerns with this COVID package.

I think about where we were a year ago. We were right here in this Chamber. It was March of 2020, and we were debating, working together in a bipartisan fashion to come up with a major—over \$2 trillion—COVID relief package.

In fact, if we look back over the course of the last 12 months, Congress passed five bipartisan COVID-19 relief packages—five of them. During that time, as we know, the Republicans were in the majority in the Senate, and we believed it was very important—we were dealing with COVID challenges in our country—that we come together in a bipartisan way to address this horrible pandemic. It didn't stop us from working with our colleagues across the aisle to reach a compromise in order to get needed relief for Montanans and the American people who were struggling because of the pandemic.

Bipartisanship—it takes work. It takes both sides coming together. It

takes a little more time as well. But for the good of Montanans and for the good of the American people, they expect that of us here in the Senate.

Unfortunately, what we are witnessing today is that “bipartisanship” is no longer in the vocabulary of President Biden and the Democrats. They have taken this bipartisan process that we have had over the course of the last 12 months and they have taken it hostage. It has become their way or the highway. Take it or leave it. They are trying to jam through a hyperpartisan—not a bipartisan but a hyperpartisan \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 package.

We shouldn't even call this a COVID-19 relief package, and here is why: Ninety percent of what is in it has nothing to do with the core health needs of combating COVID-19. Nothing. This nearly \$2 trillion package is nothing more than a Pelosi payoff, a liberal wish list that gives President Biden, NANCY PELOSI, and CHUCK SCHUMER billions of dollars for these partisan pet projects.

This COVID-19 relief package includes a laundry list of liberal priorities. Now, I am not making this up. What I am about to share was actually included in the most recently passed package of this COVID legislation out of the U.S. House, which, by the way, passed in the wee hours of the morning this past weekend, on Saturday, when the American people were asleep, and it was not supported by a single Republican Member.

By the way, contrast that to where we were a year ago. We passed a huge COVID package here in the U.S. Senate 96 to zero. You can't get any more bipartisan than that. Yet, when they jammed this package in the House Saturday morning, not a single Republican supported it. In fact, a couple Democrats opposed it.

Here is what is in that so-called relief package for COVID-19:

One hundred million dollars for NANCY PELOSI's train to nowhere. It is a Silicon Valley underground rail project to help Big Tech. You tell me what that has to do with COVID-19.

Three hundred fifty billion dollars to bail out blue States that had financial problems before the pandemic. Now, Montana should not be footing the bill to bail out States like New York, California, and Illinois, especially when we have seen reports that States are actually doing much better than projected when we look at revenues coming in in 2020. In fact, listen to this, California is projecting a \$25 billion surplus in 2020.

There is \$50 million in this package for “climate justice.”

There are millions in bailouts for Planned Parenthood. It also makes Planned Parenthood eligible for taxpayer dollars through the Paycheck Protection Program.

Now, there is \$130 billion in there for schools. Now hear this: 95 percent of it won't be spent this year. In fact, 95 percent of it is spent in years 2022 through

2028. You tell me what that has to do with this immediate rush to get this package passed when most of the spending is in the years out to 2028. This is ironic, as President Biden and the Democrats are bowing to political pressure from the teachers unions to keep kids out of the classroom.

I cannot tell you how many parents we are hearing from who want to see the schools opened up and want to see the kids back in school, back in the classroom.

They support opening the southern border for illegal immigrants over opening schools for American students.

As I have laid out, President Biden, NANCY PELOSI, and CHUCK SCHUMER's COVID-19 package is not about COVID-19 relief at all. In fact, the White House Chief of Staff, Ron Klain, said this: "This is the most progressive domestic legislation in a generation."

I believe that. This is all about political favors for Democrats. It is about cashing in on campaign promises, and it is outrageous. While Democrats are trying to further their liberal agenda under the guise of passing COVID-19 relief, we are sitting on \$1 trillion of unspent, already allocated COVID-19 relief dollars from the prior five packages.

In fact, of the last package we passed in December of \$900 billion, only about 50 percent of that—allocated dollars—is out the door.

So shoveling out almost \$2 trillion—and how much is \$2 trillion? The entire annual Federal discretionary budget of the U.S. Government is about \$1.4 trillion—the entire discretionary budget.

The Democrats want to push another \$2 trillion into this economy that is poised to rebound as businesses reopen. It is deeply irresponsible. It will needlessly cause our debt to soar to new heights and could harm our economic recovery by sparking inflation. Its partisanship is exceeded only by its recklessness.

The American comeback is well underway. Our economy is rebounding. GDP is expected to grow 10 percent by the end of the first quarter. Personal saving rates are way up—20.5 percent this past January, compared to 7.6 percent in prepandemic January 2020. Manufacturing is at its highest growth level since August of 2018.

Vaccines are being distributed and hospitalizations are going down. In fact, hospitalizations are down nearly 20 percent this week versus last week, looking across the country. In fact, more than 40 percent of those over the age of 65 are vaccinated with at least one dose. That is good news.

On vaccines, I want to recognize our Governor back home in Montana, Governor Gianforte, for his outstanding leadership on getting vaccines distributed across Montana. I also want to thank Montana's healthcare heroes for their dedication to getting the vaccines out and keeping our communities and our families safe.

In fact, just last week, Montana was recognized as the most efficient State

in the Nation—No. 1 out of 50—for administering vaccines received from the Federal Government. But in Montana, we are in need of more vaccines. That is why I joined forces with the Governor and Congressman ROSENDALE, requesting them from President Biden. I am pleased to see that it was announced just this week that Montana will be receiving 8,000 doses of the J&J vaccine in the coming days.

Vaccines and vaccine distribution are what we should be focusing on now. They are what will help us get life back to normal. They are what will end this pandemic. Yet, sadly, only 1 percent of Biden and PELOSI's COVID-19 package goes to vaccines. That is unacceptable. It is unacceptable that the partisan Pelosi-Schumer bill lacks foresight and badly misdiagnoses what America needs now, because we are seeing the light at the end of this tunnel. We must keep moving in this direction. Any future relief must be targeted and focused on vaccine distribution.

Let's just start by retargeting the \$1 trillion that is not even yet out the door. Why don't we start there? But, instead, the Democrats continue to go their own way in a purely partisan piece of legislation to spend another \$1.9 trillion, most of which does not address anything related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It must be directed instead toward ending the pandemic, helping the American people, not supporting the liberal dreams of NANCY PELOSI and CHUCK SCHUMER.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the \$1.9 trillion spending bill that we expect we will be considering probably starting tomorrow.

The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply impacted our communities, causing heartbreak and grief for hundreds of thousands of families who have lost loved ones. At the same time, it has turned our economy upside down, and it has shuttered small business, as well as schools and churches.

Without a doubt, it is during a pandemic that we here in Congress should be coming together and working to provide relief for those who are struggling, and it is for that very reason that I am proud that Republicans and Democrats have worked together. We worked together over the past year on a very bipartisan basis—a bipartisan basis—to pass five different pieces of legislation to address the pandemic.

In March of 2020, we passed the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act by a vote of 96 to 1. We passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act by a vote of 90 to 8, and the landmark Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or the CARES Act, which is the one I think most people are very familiar with. That provided \$2.2 trillion in relief, and it passed the Senate unanimously. It got every Republican and every Democratic vote.

Last summer, we unanimously passed legislation making adjustments to the Paycheck Protection Program, providing further support for our small businesses and additional funding for hospitals, for healthcare providers, as well as for COVID-19 testing. We passed it unanimously.

In late December, just over 2 months ago, we provided an additional \$900 billion in relief, including direct payments to individuals, \$120 billion in additional unemployment insurance, \$25 billion in nutrition and ag assistance for our farmers, and \$325 billion in additional support for small businesses—again, with an overwhelming bipartisan vote—bipartisan. All five of these were passed with big bipartisan votes—some of them unanimously—and much of that money has yet to be spent.

Now Democrats in Congress and the administration want to pass, on a partisan basis with only Democratic votes, a massive \$1.9 trillion bill with no input from Republicans, unlike the previous COVID-19 relief bills that we worked together on to pass to respond to this COVID epidemic.

In the House, the bill passed. It didn't get any Republican votes, and it didn't even get all the Democratic votes. It was passed solely with Democratic votes, no Republican votes, and some Democrats voting against it as well. And, again, we haven't even spent the \$900 billion we just passed on a bipartisan basis in December.

Also, the bill includes billions in spending for nonpandemic-related programs, including \$480 million for the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

As a matter of fact, here is just some of the things in here that don't relate to COVID: \$50 million for "climate justice," \$50 million for family planning funding without the Hyde protections, \$112 million for Speaker PELOSI's Silicon Valley subway, \$135 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities, \$135 million for the National Endowment for the Arts, \$200 million for the Institute of Museum and Library Services, \$12 billion in foreign aid, and \$30 billion for public transit, of which \$4.5 billion is for New York City's subway system. How does that relate to addressing COVID?

Again, like I said, we just passed \$900 billion in December, which has yet to be spent, that does address COVID. So we need to focus on spending the money that we have already provided. We need to make sure that it gets to the needs. We need to get our economy opened up. We need to get our kids back in school. Those are the priorities right now.

And then, when we look at this bill, in addition to spending on things that aren't related to COVID, let's also look at how the funding is allocated. The bill provides \$350 billion in funding to States, Territories, and localities. But

it is not based on population. Instead, it is based on unemployment. Well, that unfairly awards the States that shut down over those that stayed open. And the reality is that what we really need to do is get the vaccine out so, again, we can open up our businesses and make sure we get our kids in school. That has got to be the priority now. But how do you go forward with that kind of a formula that isn't fairly delivered as well?

Under this flawed methodology, in this bill the city of New York would receive about \$4.3 billion. That is actually more than 36 States would get. Also, the city of Chicago would receive \$1.98 billion. There are 20 States that wouldn't get that amount. Los Angeles would receive \$1.35 billion, which is more than 13 different States would receive. In addition, L.A. County would receive \$1.95 billion, bringing that valley's total to \$3.3 billion. Why is that the allocation formula?

Republicans stand ready to work with our Democratic colleagues to provide the necessary support to fill in any remaining gaps and provide targeted COVID-19 relief to our healthcare workers, continue vaccine distribution, safely reopen our schools, and provide help for those in our communities who are struggling the most. But we cannot support this \$1.9 trillion partisan bill which will add to our national debt on the backs of hard-working Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I rise today to keep fighting for those who are still hurting from this plague. I am fighting for those who have yet to receive the vaccine, and I am fighting for those who are not back to work. I am fighting to protect Medicare dollars.

But do you know who I am really here to speak for today? My three grandsons. I actually received a phone call this morning from two of them—actually, a FaceTime—and they wanted to share a story with me of a fish they caught last night. I am here to protect their future and to make sure that someday their grandkids will be able to call them and talk about a great moment in their lives.

Certainly, I am here to fight to get our children back to school, but do you know what I believe is the largest threat to their future, to their dreams, and to their success? It is the national debt. It is not just a threat to their education. It is a threat to the infrastructure they will be using for the next 20 years of their life, as well as a threat to the national security of their families.

Now, without question, I am here to fight for those who need the help now, but I am also called to help the future of our country, and our children and our grandchildren are the future of this country.

As everybody in this room knows, we have already borrowed \$4 trillion—\$4

trillion—from our grandchildren to fight this virus. But over \$1 trillion remains on the sideline and is yet to be spent. Now, my suggestion is, Why don't we start by repurposing those dollars and target them where they are needed the most, which is exactly what we would do in the business world from which I came very recently?

Look, this great American economy is coming back. The long, dark, cold winter is almost over. Unemployment is under 4 percent in Kansas and many other States, and it looks like we are going to have a strong first-quarter GDP number.

Now, as an aside, I have to highlight, though, the way this partisan bill is written, it rewards those States that overreacted and totally shut down their economies and their schools. Bailing out mismanaged States at the expense of taxpayers is simply not American.

If this administration and our Governors do their job, we can have nationwide herd immunity by April or May, and, by summer, our economy can be back to prepandemic levels, all without borrowing another \$2 trillion from our grandchildren. That comes out to \$6,000 to each child and to each one of your grandchildren—\$6,000 we want to borrow. So walk up to your children or to your grandchildren and say: Hey, we want to borrow \$6,000 from you to help bail out some mismanaged governments.

So, listen, we truly want to help those who need the help. And I ask my colleagues across the aisle: Why do you want to borrow another \$2 trillion from our grandchildren and only spend 9 percent—only 9 percent—on direct COVID relief? We simply cannot print enough money up here to solve these problems long term unless we lock in on the real, most pressing challenges.

This is what we need to do to defeat the virus, and it is very simple: get shots into arms, get people back to work, and get our kids in school. If we do these three things, our economy and Republic will come booming back.

Call this bill in front of us what you want: a boondoggle, a Christmas tree—a Christmas tree decorated with earmarks as ornaments and full of so much pork, it is dripping grease.

My friends across the aisle focused 91 percent of their attention in this bill to pay for things like a bridge from New York to Canada and an underground railroad project in Silicon Valley, money for Planned Parenthood, and stimulus checks for illegal immigrants and violent criminals.

Now, you can argue for this loan from our grandchildren, if you would like and if you don't care about their future, but at the end of the day, we are trying to borrow \$2 trillion from our grandchildren to spend on partisan pet projects, and I will never agree to that.

Let me stress once more what I am for: getting vaccines into arms, getting people back to work, and getting kids back to school.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in the discussion over the relief package we are going to be voting on later this week.

We need to go back to last year and recognize what happened in this Chamber on five different occasions. I have been in the Senate now for 6 years, and very seldom do we see both parties come together and recognize we have a problem and we have to relieve the American people.

We had a historic pandemic, first of its kind, in 100 years. COVID hit our shores. What did we do? We spent days and weeks, but over the course of those days and weeks, we came together with five bipartisan packages that really address the root problems and the challenges created by COVID.

We passed the Paycheck Protection Program, something that I think was extraordinary. The banking community got together even before we had the rules on how the loan should be underwritten and how they would be forgiven, and they decided to mobilize and provide desperately needed capital and liquidity to businesses, and they saved many, many businesses in North Carolina.

We passed Operation Warp Speed, a program that for the first time in this Nation's history, or any nation's history, we went from a known virus to two multiple vaccines with high degrees of efficacy that are now being put into the arms of Americans at a rate of almost 2 million a day. We did that because we focused on a problem and we fixed it and we continue to evolve it—five different bipartisan bills.

Now the sixth one is before us. It is called a COVID relief package, but we all know that much of what is in this bill has nothing to do with the COVID impacts and nothing to do with the immediate spending in this coming year.

Now, I understand elections have consequences. It has been said by President Obama and others, and we have a change of leadership here in the Senate and change of leadership in the White House. But I really hate that we are going to leave a mark. Probably, and hopefully, the last COVID—the last bill that would have some COVID relief in it is going to go down as one of the most probably partisan fights that we are going to have this year on this floor later this week.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle decided to go it alone. That is exactly what you are going to see in full display come Thursday this week when we go into what we call vote-arama.

I feel like we have to be intellectually honest with the American people. We know that we have to provide more relief. We know that people are struggling, businesses are struggling, individuals are struggling, and I get all that, and that is why I wish so much that we were going to have another bill

laid down on the floor that was going to get strong bipartisan support. But to call this bill that is coming before us this week a COVID relief package, I think, is being dishonest with the American people.

This chart probably best illustrates what the American people need to understand. That is how much is in this bill that is legitimately focused on the crisis that we are trying to continue to manage through very targeted, focused dollars—American taxpayer dollars—that in this case, as some of my colleagues have said, they are not even dollars we have collected yet. We are going to collect them from my two granddaughters and future generations: a \$1.9 trillion package with about 9 percent going to something that you could reasonably argue has a nexus with the impact of COVID, whether it is on individuals, whether it is people out of work, or whether it is businesses that are trying to make payroll. That is a fact, 9 percent.

Now, I feel like at some point we need to get back to what we did on five different occasions before. We knew businesses were failing. They needed relief. We gave them the Paycheck Protection Program. We knew that people were out of work because of business closures. Maybe you had to take off work because you didn't have daycare because your school was closed. All of those are legitimate reasons to provide additional relief. That is what we should be voting on this week, and in small part we are, but in large part we are not.

I think it was someone in the Obama administration who was famously quoted for saying: "Never waste a crisis." And it looks like, to me, that this crisis is being used to advance policy discussions that we should have a debate on the floor, but we are not going to have that. We are going to have a vote with a simple majority, not rising to the gold standard in this institution for 60 votes, and we are going to pass things that have virtually nothing and, in most cases, absolutely nothing to do with COVID.

How on Earth can you provide education funding and say that you are doing it for COVID impacts, and much of that money—the majority of the money—is not even going to be spent until beginning in 2022 and then playing out in 2028? How can you say that has anything to do with the immediate crisis of getting these kids back in school, making sure that teachers are safe, and making sure that we can recover from what I think will be irreparable damage for a number of students who have never been allowed to go back into school?

When we talk about the economic stimulus payments, there are a lot of people who need help. There are a lot of people who need a check. But the proposal that I have seen, the proposal we are going to vote on this week, is giving money to people who would like it.

I can understand why it is very popular. Who wouldn't, in this Chamber,

want to think that they are going to get a \$3,000 or \$4,000 check in the mail—whether you were out of work at all, whether your combined household income is \$150,000, and you are still working. You weren't impacted by it. I understand why it is popular. But is it really fair?

You know, there is a trailer park in Antioch, TN, on Richards Road. I grew up in it, and I ride there when I go visit my family. I go back and visit with people who live in that trailer park. My guess is almost every single one of them need help, and my guess is many of them who work in the service industry have been out of work for the better part of the last year. We should tell them: You are going to get some help, but that neighborhood that is about a mile down the road from that trailer park I grew up in, where you have got combined household incomes of \$150,000, both the husband and wife are working, both of the kids have daycare options, they are going to get it too. Is it really fair for the people who are struggling the most? Is it really fair to say that we are providing education relief, and it is not going to be spent until I would have to run for reelection again in 2028?

I think we need to be honest with the American people. If we want to have a debate about all of the red, all of the money that is going to be committed this week that has nothing to do with COVID relief, let's be honest with the American people. What we are doing this week, I think, is dishonest.

What we are doing this week is bailing out States like my State of North Carolina, a \$4 billion surplus this year; bailing out the States of North Carolina, New York, Illinois, California, instead of trying to use that money, which we don't have—but if we need to spend it, let's spend it on those folks who grew up like I did. Let's spend it on the businesses that may shutter their doors. Let's do that. Let's let that be the sixth bipartisan COVID-relief package that we put together, not what we are going to be forced to vote on this week.

I hope the American people know we recognize—we Republicans recognize people are hurting, and we want to give them help. We have proven that because we voted in five different instances, on a bipartisan basis, to do that. What the leadership of this Chamber is doing this week is taking us down a course to where we will probably never have a chance to come back together and have that kind of bipartisan result for this crisis or future ones.

So I am going to work hard on amendments to potentially tailor and remove some of the red. In the meantime, I think anybody who supports the bill that is coming over from the House should seriously consider whether they are being honest with the American people and their constituents.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, with a one-party monopoly of Washington, DC, Democrats are back to their old spending habits. Most of the \$1.9 trillion within the Democrats' "COVID" package has absolutely nothing to do with COVID.

Unlike the previous five pandemic relief bills that were approved with overwhelming bipartisan support, Democrats have shown no interest in working with Republicans and are instead fast-tracking this highly partisan bill through Congress.

Now, the bulk of this budget-busting bill is devoted to fulfilling a wish list of longtime liberal priorities, including billion-dollar bailouts, progressive program expansions, and pricey partisan pet projects.

And let's talk about a few of those. Look at this right here, a New York bridge to Canada. That is \$1.5 million for a bridge connecting the State of New York to, yes, another country, Canada.

What about this one: the cleverly worded provision that earmarks—yes, I said it, folks. Earmarking is already happening right here—\$140 million to a subway in Silicon Valley in California. What does that have to do with COVID?

And a whopping \$350 billion blue-State bailout that rewards the States that have imposed the strictest lockdowns. Folks, we should be rewarding the States that demonstrated leadership by finding ways to safely stay open, not those that shut down our schools, closed our businesses, and killed our American jobs.

But, most importantly, COVID relief should stay focused on COVID. There is still about \$1 trillion of COVID funding that Congress previously approved that hasn't even been spent yet. Yes, folks, \$1 trillion. So why in the world are we looking at spending yet another \$2 trillion, of course, on things that are not even related to COVID?

That isn't to say that there aren't needs, because there are. We know that all across our country. But instead of bridges and bailouts, the money should be focused on immediate help to get our moms and dads back to work. And to do that, we need to do a few things: No. 1, let's safely reopen our schools. Let's, No. 2, expand access to quality, affordable childcare. And, No. 3, let's distribute the vaccine as quickly as possible.

While the bill does actually provide some assistance for these purposes, even here, the Democrats show how out of touch they are with what is actually happening on the ground.

For example, nearly \$15 billion is included for the childcare and development block grant. You would think that is a good thing because it is needed. At a time when so many moms are being forced to choose between their careers and children as a result of school closures, the support is needed. But a loophole in the bill that is coming over from the House allows millionaires to use up this program, which

was created to make quality childcare affordable for working parents who are struggling to make ends meet. Yes, millionaires qualify for this assistance, not just our struggling families. And while additional funding will certainly help many, expanding eligibility to those millionaires who have the financial means to afford their own nannies will not.

While the bill also extends the unemployment benefit, and it does provide an extra \$400 per week for those who are out of work because of the pandemic—there, again, another loophole—there is no limit placed on the eligibility. That means someone who may be out of work but is still earning \$1 million or more qualifies for these bonus payments.

Now, you might laugh—you might laugh—and ask: How many people would apply for unemployment assistance if they were making \$1 million? Well, folks, the answer is thousands.

During the great recession just a decade ago, more than 3,000 individuals with adjusted gross incomes of \$1 million collected unemployment benefits. Because this bill doesn't cap who may receive support, jobless millionaires may end up collecting as much as \$1 million in enhanced unemployment assistance every week. This is like a reverse millionaires' tax. The Democrats are paying millionaires not to work with taxes paid by lower income workers. How do you like that socialist scheme?

So if you are a coastal elite living in California or New York and maybe making a million bucks despite being out of work, this bill is especially generous for you.

But, folks, this isn't Monopoly money. This is the real deal, and someone has to eventually pick up the tab. Sadly, it is going to be paid out of the pockets of essential workers and others who are continuing to work, those who pay taxes and keep America running.

Now, as an eternal optimist, I am hopeful that when this bill comes before the Senate, my Democratic colleagues will actually work with us to cut the pork and refocus the bill on what it should be focused on: the immediate needs of the COVID pandemic—not a fancy subway, not a bridge to Canada, and, certainly, not wealthy State bailouts. Focus on the immediate needs of the COVID pandemic.

And if not, I am afraid the Democrats will just keep passing go and collecting hundreds of dollars from hard-working taxpayers across this country, only to pay for their pricey partisan pet projects and wish-list items that have nothing to do with COVID.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. YOUNG. I don't rise today, Mr. President, in opposition to COVID relief, nor do I rise today to oppose money for vaccine distribution and

testing, nor do I rise to oppose stimulus spending for those who really need it—our hard-hit businesses, rank-and-file fellow Americans—and I certainly don't rise to oppose additional grants and loans for other enterprises out there that just aren't going to be able to make it through this, like our not-for-profits that are essential to all of our communities. But I rise today, instead, to oppose this partisan, pork-filled American Rescue Plan.

You know, I am not known for histrionics in this body, and I am not engaging in them. This is a partisan bill full of a liberal wish list of items that, frankly, aren't popular with Hoosiers, and they won't be popular with the American people the more they get to know about what is loaded up in this \$1.9 trillion package of goodies.

In the last year, during a time of political division and strife, this Congress came together around COVID relief. We rose to the challenge presented to us by this global pandemic. We didn't bring it on. By most accounts, it came from China. But we came together to address this foreign threat that came to our shores that has decimated our economy, that has threatened lives and livelihoods, and we passed 5 relief measures with well more than 90 votes in every instance.

The total, nearly \$3.5 trillion—and I make no apologies for those investments. Those were investments in public health. Those were investments in our communities. Those were investments in our employers. Those were investments in our loved ones, to provide them safety and security and a measure of comfort but to save their very lives. These are investments in our frontline workers. We did all of that in a bipartisan fashion with very little opposition—very little opposition.

Unity, that is what this country needs. I heard that coming from the lips of Republicans and Democrats alike at the highest levels weeks ago, and that is what I pine for. I want our country to be unified. I believe we can be unified. But this is not a step in the right direction.

Even though much of the money that we have allocated to address the many consequences of this global pandemic has not been spent yet, we Republicans have tried to work with the Biden administration on a sixth relief package over the past month. In fact, I was 1 of 10 Republicans who—I say this commendably toward the Biden administration; specifically, I commend the President for inviting myself and nine other Republicans into the Oval Office to discuss our counterproposal.

And I have to say, the \$600 billion proposal that we were providing was, for this U.S. Senator, a bit of a stretch. You know, so much money was still in the pipeline, it wasn't even clear that that much was needed. But we certainly did not need \$1.9 trillion, and we all agreed upon that.

Unfortunately, we sort of left that meeting with a supposition that, unfor-

tunately, has been substantiated, that there was an intention to move forward, regardless of the respectful and fact-based exchange we had about the wastefulness of the \$1.9 trillion package and the extent to which the \$600 billion package more than met the needs of getting people vaccinated, getting people back to work, and getting our kids back to school as safely and as quickly as possible.

Here we are, though. Instead of a targeted relief package, we have seen our Democratic leaders load up a \$1.9 trillion bill with wish-list items.

And so here is what I am going to have to educate Hoosiers on in the coming months because I think they actually believe this is mostly about vaccination and getting kids back to school and getting people back to work—and I wish that were the case. But, no, it is about borrowing money so that we can pay for I think what can fairly be characterized as a Blue State bailout to the tune of \$350 billion.

You see, a lot of States aren't like the State of Indiana. The State of Indiana, over the years, has balanced our budget and come up with a rainy day fund. And we are criticized, oftentimes for not spending money out of that rainy day fund. But the rainiest of days hit, and Indiana was ready. Not every State did that. Many States have elected leaders who have made unfulfillable promises to their constituency over the years related to their retirements and so forth. So now, in this package, is \$350 billion going toward those States to be used for purposes other than pandemic relief.

Also in this bill, \$1.9 trillion package, is a Silicon Valley subway. I am not sure how it got in there. I do know that Speaker PELOSI hails from the area.

The National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities—I love arts; I love the humanities. We can debate the proper role of government in funding these public cultural goods, but let's do it some other time. Let's not do it in the course of pandemic relief legislation.

Expansion of the Paycheck Protection Program to provide loans to Planned Parenthood, will force certain taxpayers, like myself, to violate our conscience—much, much more. It is full of waste. It is fat with waste.

This body passed a \$1.9 trillion CARES Act in March of 2020.

One year later, Democrats, along party lines, are poised to jam through another \$1.9 trillion package. To give you some sense of how much a trillion dollars is—these numbers can be abstract sometimes—try to visualize \$1 bills stacked from the ground halfway up to the moon. That is a trillion dollars, I was told earlier today. That is a lot of money, and we are borrowing every cent of it.

I think it is important we consider the difference between what we passed a year ago and what we are now considering as likely to pass along party-line votes. When the CARES Act went into

effect, the Nation was shut down. Only so-called essential businesses, businesses that could operate safely, were open.

Indiana's unemployment rate then was 17.5 percent. We have done a great job managing this crisis in the State of Indiana. Most businesses are reopened. The unemployment rate is 3.4 percent in our State. We don't have the same public health challenges of other places that have shut everything down. I will let others try and define why that is.

When the CARES Act became law, not a single school in Indiana was open, and in Indiana today most schools are open to in-person learning, in-person instruction, many full time. And let me take this opportunity to commend our administrators and our teachers in the State of Indiana for showing up for work. We don't see that all around the country. Last week, in more than 2,000 schools in Indiana, there were only 62 teacher cases. I told you basically all the schools have opened up. Only 62 teacher cases in Indiana. That is one case for every 33 schools. I would say we are doing a pretty good job managing the risk, following the science.

When the CARES Act became law, a vaccine was a far-off dream. I can remember President Trump indicating there would be a vaccine by year's end. People laughed. Democrats scoffed, mocked. Members of the media mocked him. Not only do we have one vaccine, but then comes vaccine number two and vaccine number three, all in the pipeline because of Operation Warp Speed that the Trump administration implemented to, at once, streamline the regulatory process for approval and also begin manufacturing in parallel. It is good that the Biden administration is building on those successes.

So, look, there is no doubt that some Hoosiers and many Americans are still hurting. We can and we will and we must help those people, but President Biden and the national Democrats' so-called American Rescue Plan is not the way to do it. It just is not responsible. We are better than that.

So we who oppose this, we who happen to be Republican U.S. Senators who oppose this partisan effort to use this crisis to advance initiatives like arts funding and a subway next to Speaker PELOSI's district, along partisan lines, we are not going to just let this pass and allow the national Democrats to cram unrelated policies into what should be a bill squarely targeted at this crisis. We need a bill just like the five bills that we passed in a strongly bipartisan fashion just last year.

So today we have more than a million Hoosiers who have received their first dose of vaccine, including more than 70 percent of Hoosiers age 70 and older. There is no doubt that some Hoosiers are still hurting. Again, we will be helping those folks.

So this is really quite simple. We need to work together, Republicans

and Democrats, for the good of the country. This does indeed remain a national crisis. We had negative economic growth last year because a global pandemic interrupted the greatest period of economic growth in my lifetime.

We need to recover. We are poised for a recovery this year, but we need to do it in a targeted and in a fiscally responsible way and in a fashion that doesn't undermine trust among one another and one that doesn't break trust with the American people by spending their money irresponsibly. I regret that that probably won't happen in the next few days, but I resolve to continue fighting for Hoosiers, for fiscal responsibility, and to constructively work with this administration however we can moving forward.

With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, last week we paused as a Congress to recognize half a million people who have died in the United States due to COVID. Unfortunately, that number is still climbing. Half a million. That is a lot of families that are affected. Those are a lot of lives lost. That is a lot of pain that we have experienced as a nation, and obviously that is a global pain that is being experienced.

Over the last now 11 months, this Congress has gathered in a bipartisan way five times, with wide bipartisan majorities, to be able to address the issue of COVID-19. We have allocated \$4 trillion, all of it borrowed, all of it—none of this was budgeted money—all of that borrowed money, with a common agreement that this is a pandemic and a crisis and that to be able to stabilize the American economy, we have to do what we have to do, but we should not do more than we have to, knowing that every dollar we are spending is borrowed.

Last year, at almost this exact same date, this Congress gathered together and put together a \$2 trillion CARES Act package. It was an aggressive package because we saw the shutdown of the American economy. Quite frankly, we saw the shutdown of the world's economy at that time period. Literally, the world seemed to stop by the end of March, and we all went into seclusion. We saw dramatic spikes in unemployment and desperate need around the country, but we all knew this was a crisis moment and we would get through it and we would get out of it.

Now, almost a year later, where we saw unemployment soaring to 15 percent-plus across the country, we are now at 6.7 percent unemployment. Every State is opened at some stage, and some States completely opened. Many schools are open. Some schools continue to stay closed and say they are afraid and that they are not going to reengage, while thousands and thousands of other schools around the country are open and taking care of their kids in person.

We have seen this patchwork of response, but one thing is very true about right now versus 11 months ago. We are in a very different place now, as an economy and as a nation, than what we were 11 months ago. But the strange thing is, now, 11 months later, my Democratic colleagues are putting forward a \$1.9 trillion package, almost the exact same size of what we had getting into the beginning of this. They are doing it. As just about everyone sees we are at the end, they want to borrow another \$2 trillion.

It is not just \$2 trillion to be able to spend toward COVID. I wish that were so. One percent of this package actually goes toward vaccines. Five percent of this package actually goes toward public health. In the school funding portion of it, 95 percent of the funding in the school funding portion of it, which is \$170 billion for school funding, won't even be spent this year at all—at all.

Let me run that past you again. Ninety-five percent of the \$170 billion allocated for funding for schools won't be spent in the year of the pandemic at all. It is future spending. To give you a picture of how big \$170 billion is toward education, the total U.S. education budget for the entire Department of Education this year is \$66 billion. For the entire year, for all of education in the whole country, it is \$66 billion, and my Democratic colleagues say: But we need to spend \$170 billion just for COVID, which, by the way, we are not going to even start spending until next year.

Do you know why? Because this bill is not about COVID. I wish it were, because there is real need out there. I wish it were. This is for things like \$350 billion to go to cities and States, to be able to bail out some of their pension funds and other things that are there.

Why do I say that? Because when you look at the statistics of the revenue loss for the States—across the entire United States, the revenue loss for all States is .1 percent from last year—.1 percent—not 1 percent, .1 percent change, because almost every State is dependent on property tax, and as people who pay property tax know, you are still going to have to pay your property tax. So the revenues, quite frankly, continue to stay strong.

In many of the cities that I have in Oklahoma—in fact, one of the cities in my State just last week reported their revenue for sales tax revenue is up 20 percent—20 percent, in their revenue—because people are staying home and shopping more. They are doing more shopping online, so the tax revenue is actually coming back into their States and their cities even more in many of these communities.

But there is \$350 billion allocated to these cities. You would think, well, there will be some fair distribution. Actually, that would be nice, but it is not true. They set up an unemployment formula that is based on, those States that shut down the longest and

kept everything closed the longest, they are the ones that actually get the most money.

So, in other words, if you reopened your economy and you worked to get your schools opened and you worked to get jobs opened, you get a chance to have very little support. If you stayed closed and kept your schools closed and kept your businesses closed, well, then you will get additional dollars coming in, regardless of what your revenue is—even for big States like California that their revenue actually went up last year.

Let me run that past you again. California's revenue went up last year. They get \$27 billion out of this, after their revenue went up.

Remember that, in the CARES Act last March, this Congress added \$150 billion to cities and States, \$150 billion, and spread that around the country to be able to cover it because there was a panic to think there were going to be major losses, but at the end of it, .1 percent off of the previous year.

This has additional funding for Planned Parenthood. I am not sure why abortion is needed for COVID relief, but they have additional money for Planned Parenthood included. They have a tunnel for San Francisco, which clearly is not COVID related, a bridge in New York State, \$50 million for climate justice grants. There are—on and on and on—all these additional things that are just stuck into the process.

And I would say this Congress has been active to be able to do what it takes to be able to help in every moment, but we have also tried to be wise in the process to say let's spend what needs to be spent when it needs to be spent.

Let me give you an example of that. As I mentioned, for vaccines in this particular bill, 1 percent is set aside for vaccines. That would be interesting except for the fact, in vaccines, the CDC has distributed only \$3 billion of the almost \$9 billion that Congress has allocated to the CDC for vaccine distribution. They still have almost \$6 billion remaining for vaccines right now.

They have spent only \$20 billion of the \$37 billion allocated for the vaccine treatment and development and testing—only \$20 billion of the \$37 billion for the actual development and treatment—still another \$6 billion remaining for distribution.

And on top of all that, today the Biden administration said they have struck new deals with vaccine folks so they can get vaccines to every single American by the end of May. They already have all that they need for vaccine distribution, development, and purchasing, yet this particular bill asks for billions more in vaccine because that sounds like a good idea—except, when you check the facts, they already have all they need for the vaccine purchase, development, distribution.

But it sounds good, kind of like, we need more money for education. It

sounds good when you say you need more money for education, except for the vast majority of the education funds, like around \$86 billion, is still unspent from the previous bills in education money that was sent.

For the ag money that has been allocated, \$26 billion for ag just done in December, only \$24 billion remains of that \$26 billion. In other words, ample funds are still sitting there for ag, for assistance for schools, for vaccines, for testing.

There is \$14 billion still remaining in the fund for testing, untapped. But my Democratic colleagues can go to the microphone and say we need money for schools and for vaccines and for testing. And everyone is like, "Oh, my gosh, certainly, we do," until you check the facts and find out this is not about vaccine and testing and schools at all. It is about all the pet programs that go with it, and it is about allocating billions and billions and billions of dollars to agencies so they can hold them and use them for other things.

That is what this is about, and it hides under the cloak of COVID, and it hides behind the pain of half a million Americans who have lost friends and family members.

Don't use their pain to be able to amp up government. Let's have the debate about issues that we need to have on government, but don't abuse the pain of Americans and pretend you are trying to fix something that we are not trying to fix.

I yield floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to join my friend and colleague from Oklahoma, as well as the Senator from Iowa, who has previously spoken, and the Senator from Indiana in opposing the Democrats' \$1.9 trillion spending bill.

The Democrats want to call it the sixth coronavirus bill. In fact, that is false. It is not a true statement because only about \$1 out of every \$11 being spent on this monstrosity is really focused on coronavirus health. The rest is a partisan liberal wish list that the Democrats have wanted to pass for a long, long time—long before the pandemic, long before anyone in this country had ever even heard of coronavirus.

I remember President Obama's Chief of Staff, Rahm Emanuel, famously said: "Never let a good crisis go to waste." Well, that is what they did under President Obama. They saw a crisis. They passed laws that had nothing to do with what had caused it. And now here we are a dozen years later. President Biden is in the White House, and he is using that playbook once again.

President Biden's Chief of Staff calls this bill, the one coming to the floor right now—he described this on MSNBC the other day as—"the most progressive domestic legislation in a generation"—"the most progressive domestic legislation in a generation."

More progressive than ObamaCare, more progressive than the Obama-Biden stimulus—that doesn't sound like a coronavirus relief bill to me.

The White House Chief of Staff admits this isn't mainstream. This is radical. And you know, he is absolutely right about that. In the House, not a single Republican voted for this bill. Actually, Democrats joined every Republican in opposing it.

President Biden ran for President as being mainstream, as being a unifier. That is how he got to the Oval Office. But ever since then, it has been scorched-earth partisanship every day since that time.

Last week, President Biden gave a speech about the bill. He talked about Senate Republicans, those of us who are on the floor today and coming up next. He said: "What would they cut?"

I am very glad he asked. President Biden can start by cutting \$350 billion of bailing out States and local governments. State tax revenues are down less than 0.1 of a percent, as we just heard from the Senator from Oklahoma. Most States actually have more tax revenue than before the pandemic. Actually, 44 States have more tax revenue than before the pandemic.

President Biden could cut the \$85 billion that is earmarked for union pension funds, to bail them out. This has nothing to do with coronavirus. Unions have been mismanaging their members' money for decades.

President Biden can cut the \$4.5 billion for the New York City subway system. He could cut \$111 million for a subway system in Silicon Valley for NANCY PELOSI, \$270 million in funding for the arts and humanities. He could cut \$200 million from museums and libraries. That is not coronavirus. He could cut \$12 billion in foreign aid. He could cut \$36 billion in subsidized health insurance for people making over \$100,000 a year. It is a lot of income to additionally get health insurance subsidies.

We all know President Biden loves Amtrak. Well, he could cut \$1.5 billion in funding for Amtrak in this bill. That has nothing to do with coronavirus. He could cut \$1.5 million for the funding for the bridge from New York to Canada. It is probably a pet project for the majority leader.

To answer the President's question of what could we cut, we could cut a lot. Thankfully, the Senate Parliamentarian already cut \$67 billion from the bill. That is how much Democrats' national wage mandate was going to cost. Yet there is still a lot we can cut.

Here is the bottom line. The people of Wyoming, whom I visit with every weekend while I am at home, don't want to live with wish lists. They want to make sure they can stay at work, their kids can stay in school, and they get the virus behind them.

When I say "stay," that is because the kids in Wyoming have been in school since last August, in spite of the fact that it seems like only half the kids in America are back in school.

You can either get to yes or you can get to no. And the people in Wyoming wanted to get to yes when it came to getting kids back to school. What we see President Biden doing is saying yes to the teachers union. He has paid the ransom note, and this is the money being paid to them, not to get our kids to school but to keep the teachers unions happy.

I believe teachers want to get kids back to school. Teachers want to teach, but not the unions who pull the strings and are certainly pulling the strings of Joe Biden in the White House.

Working families don't want politicians to exploit a crisis for political gains. They want to protect their physical health and their financial health and well-being. So it is time to stop trying to exploit a crisis, which is what I see every Democrat doing. Let's give the American people what they really need all across the country—getting back to work, getting kids back to school who aren't there already, and putting the disease behind us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, before I speak, I ask unanimous consent that myself, Senator BRAUN, and Senator HIRONO be able to complete our remarks before the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WHISTLEBLOWER PROGRAM

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to compliment that the Commodity Futures Trading Commission operates a highly successful whistleblower program. As one of the Senators who led the effort to establish that whistleblower program back in 2010, I am proud of what this program has accomplished.

Since the Commission issued its first whistleblower award in 2014, whistleblowers have helped the Agency root out waste, fraud, and abuse in the commodities trading industry and has recovered nearly \$950 million. That is a very good reason to compliment the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. That is a lot of restitution for harmed investors. It is also a lot of money going to the U.S. Treasury and to the American taxpayers.

Now, if Congress doesn't act quickly, all of that progress could come to a swift and sudden halt.

Several months ago, the Commission contacted my office to tell me that its whistleblower program is facing the prospect of a sudden cash shortage—one that could require it to furlough staff and even close down its operations.

The reason for this potential shortage isn't that the whistleblower program has wasted or mismanaged funds or that it hasn't been doing its job. It is just the exact opposite. Whistleblowers have been approaching the Commission to report actionable claims of wrongdoing in far greater

numbers than before, and its whistleblower program has grown at a much faster rate than Congress expected when we created it in 2010.

Last year, the Commission issued a single whistleblower award for approximately \$9 million. In the past, it has given out awards for as much as \$30 million. Remember, this is money given out to find out about fraud so people can be punished, bringing money into the Federal Treasury.

As a result of these successes, in the near future the Commission faces the possibility of having to pay out several large whistleblower awards in close succession. Now, if that happens, the whistleblower program could run short of having the cash on hand that it needs to pay these awards and other office operating expenses. Again, this is not an issue of bad management. It just means that the program works better than we thought when we enacted it in 2010.

By law, the Commission is only allowed to keep a certain amount of cash on hand to pay out awards, and that amount is capped under existing law at \$100 million. Because Congress expected the program to remain relatively small, which it has not, it set the cap for the Consumer Protection Fund lower than the cap it has set for larger whistleblower programs, such as the one at the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The Consumer Protection Fund is also used to pay the operating expenses of the Whistleblower Office—in other words, the employees that follow up on these fraudulent claims.

Increasing the cap will ensure that the Commission can keep enough of the proceeds from the fines it collects on hand to pay whistleblower awards and also to ensure that the program itself doesn't run out of money.

In 2019, I introduced the Whistleblower Programs Improvement Act, which increased the cap on the fund and made several additional improvements to the program, including provisions that would allow the Commission greater flexibility to share information with law enforcement.

I did this because I realized that as the awards became bigger and more frequent, it was only a matter of time before the Commission would run into trouble. A year later, my prediction came true, and the Commission itself notified me of their impending money problems—those same money problems I am talking about.

I introduced a bipartisan bill, along with Senators HASSAN, ERNST, and BALDWIN, in December, just a few months ago, to quickly address this problem. I worked with then-Chairman Roberts and then-Ranking Member STABENOW to include language that would have made the most critical updates for the program in last year's omnibus. These updates would have ensured that the Whistleblower Office could keep enough funds on hand to pay upcoming whistleblower awards

and continue to fund the operation and to pay for staff.

What often happens around here is that this effort, unfortunately, also hit a roadblock, and the language wasn't included by the House of Representatives. Now, 2 months have passed since then and a matter that was already urgent in December has become even more critical right now.

The Commission told my office they have now completely stopped work on four cases, and these four cases potentially would have large awards. And if they get these large awards, it could bankrupt the fund. It is now a conflict of interest for staff who are still paid to even work on those cases because they know if they were to approve the large awards, it could mean putting themselves out of a job. That is totally unacceptable. Whistleblowers shouldn't have to wait just because Congress has been dragging its feet on this issue. That is why I reintroduced my bill and ask my colleagues to support this legislation to fix the cap and to protect this very successful whistleblower program.

This is a stand-alone bill, a very short and simple bill. It increases the cap on the Customer Protection Fund from \$100 million to \$150 million and requires that funds needed for the operating expenses of the Whistleblower Office be held in a separate account to ensure that the Whistleblower Office will have the resources it needs to continue employment of staff while the amount in the Customer Protection Fund builds to a higher level.

Allowing this successful Whistleblower Office to close simply because it is doing its job—a job well done—is unacceptable to me, and I hope it is unacceptable to the other 99 Members of this Congress. We ought to be able to get this bill passed quickly so that we can keep this successful whistleblower program going to protect the customers. It ought to be unacceptable, then, to every Member of this Congress. It is important that we act now to ensure that this doesn't happen. That is why I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bipartisan legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 294

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President, today I rise to ask that the Senate grant unanimous consent to pass a bill that restores parents' rights to be part of medical decisions for their children.

More than 70 percent of Americans agree that parents should have the legal right to stop an abortion from being performed on their minor child. Consequently, more than half of the States have laws on the books that require some form of parental notification. Unfortunately, the State laws cannot be fully enforced when children travel over State lines or abortion providers assist minors in circumventing State laws.

More troubling, evidence has surfaced in recent years that abortion clinic staff deliberately fail to report suspected cases of statutory rape as required by Federal law. In some cases, staff even help to hide these crimes from parents and law enforcement.

An undercover operation revealed that a disturbing 91 percent of Planned Parenthood employees agreed to help conceal an instance of statutory rape when a caller posing as a 13-year-old girl indicated she wanted to conceal a relationship with a 22-year-old boyfriend by getting an abortion. This too often means that children seeking abortions are left alone and vulnerable when making a very difficult decision.

My bill, the Parental Notification and Intervention Act, would combat the troubling trend that cuts parents out of medical decisionmaking. The bill prohibits an abortion provider from performing an abortion on an unemancipated child without written notification to parents. This creates legal protections for parents and ensures that children are not left alone or unsupported when making difficult medical decisions with long-lasting consequences.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 294 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. Further, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the majority of the minors who become pregnant tell their parents about the pregnancy even when they plan to seek an abortion. But it is not always possible or even advisable that a parent be informed. For some minors, telling their parents that they were sexually active, let alone pregnant, can lead to physical abuse. It can lead to those minors being thrown out of their homes. One study found that 45 percent of young people who did not seek advice from their parents about a pregnancy experienced significant negative consequences—such as punishment, abuse, being forced out of their home—when their parents found out.

By requiring that parents of minors seeking an abortion be notified and setting the bar for an exception to this rule at a nearly insurmountable level, this bill ignores this reality of what might happen to these young people. In doing so, it turns an already difficult decision for a young person into an almost impossible one. It puts minors' health and safety at risk while doing nothing to strengthen families.

This is made clear by the fact that all of the major medical organizations, including the American Medical Association,

the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Society for Adolescent Medicine, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Public Health Association—all of these groups oppose laws like this one that mandate parental involvement in minors' abortion decisions.

Let's be clear. This is yet another partisan attack on a woman's constitutionally-protected right to choose. It is completely unnecessary and distracts from the important work the Senate is doing right now to deliver urgently needed COVID relief.

For these reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's objection is heard.

NOMINATION OF CECILIA ELENA ROUSE

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President I strongly support the nomination of Cecilia Rouse to chair the Council of Economic Advisors. Dr. Rouse's career has focused on strengthening labor markets for American workers, improving our education system, and addressing the structural inequities that stand in the way of making the economy work for all Americans. She brings exactly the right experience and expertise that we need to help our Nation weather the economic storm caused by the pandemic and build back better.

Dr. Rouse was one of the clearest voices on the problem of long-term unemployment following the last recession. The discussions that my colleagues and I have already had with Dr. Rouse make clear that she remains focused on helping workers who lost their jobs get back to work as the economy recovers it and, going forward, on preventing the problem of chronic long-term unemployment that we saw even before the pandemic.

If confirmed, Dr. Rouse would be the first African-American and the fourth woman to lead the Council of Economic Advisors in its 74 year history. She has been a strong leader in academia and government, and I urge my colleagues to support her confirmation.

VOTE ON THE ROUSE NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS.) All postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Rouse nomination?

Ms. CANTWELL. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

The result was announced—yeas 95, nays 4, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 72 Ex.]

YEAS—95

Baldwin	Hagerty	Peters
Barraso	Hassan	Portman
Bennet	Hawley	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Risch
Blunt	Hickenlooper	Romney
Booker	Hirono	Rosen
Boozman	Hoeven	Rounds
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Brown	Inhofe	Sanders
Burr	Johnson	Sasse
Cantwell	Kaine	Schatz
Capito	Kelly	Schumer
Cardin	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Shelby
Cassidy	Lankford	Sinema
Collins	Leahy	Smith
Coons	Lee	Stabenow
Cornyn	Lujan	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Lummis	Tester
Cramer	Manchin	Thune
Crapo	Markey	Tillis
Cruz	Marshall	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warnock
Ernst	Moran	Warren
Feinstein	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Fischer	Murphy	Wicker
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden
Graham	Ossoff	Young
Grassley	Padilla	

NAYS—4

Cotton	Scott (FL)
Paul	Tuberville

NOT VOTING—1

Blackburn

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and the President be immediately notified of Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BUDGET ENFORCEMENT LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, S. Con. Res. 5, the fiscal year 2021 congressional budget resolution, included an instruction to the chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget to file enforceable levels in the Senate in the event the budget was agreed to without the need to appoint a committee of conference on the measure. On Friday, February 5, 2021, the Senate passed the budget resolution, and the

House of Representatives passed it without changes later that day. As such, today, I submit the required filing.

Specifically, section 4001 of the fiscal year 2021 congressional budget resolution allows the chairman to file an allocation for fiscal year 2021 for the Committee on Appropriations and an allocation for fiscal years 2021, 2021 through 2025, and 2021 through 2030 for committees other than the Committee on Appropriations.

In addition, section 4005 of S. Con. Res. 5 provides authority for the chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget to adjust the allocations, ag-

gregates, and other appropriate budgetary levels to reflect changes resulting from the Congressional Budget Office's updates to its baseline for fiscal years 2021 through 2030. On February 11, 2021, CBO released "The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2021 to 2031."

The figures included in this filing are consistent with the spending limits set forth in the Budget Control Act of 2011, as amended by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019, P.L. 116-137, as well as with the levels included in S. Con. Res. 5, as adjusted pursuant to section 4005 of that budget resolution.

For purposes of enforcing the Senate's pay-as-you-go rule, which is found

in section 4106 of the fiscal year 2018 congressional budget resolution, I am resetting the Senate's scorecard to zero for all fiscal years.

All years in the accompanying tables are fiscal years.

Finally, this enforcement filing supersedes the filings made pursuant to section 205 the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019.

I ask unanimous consent that the tables detailing enforcement in the Senate be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ALLOCATION OF SPENDING AUTHORITY TO SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

[Pursuant to Section 302 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and S. Con. Res. 5]

[\$ in billions]

	Budget authority	Outlays
Appropriations:		
Revised Security Category Discretionary Budget Authority ¹	740.606	n/a
Revised Nonsecurity Category Discretionary Budget Authority ¹	849.900	n/a
General Purpose Outlays ¹		1,721.598
Memo:		
Subtotal	1,590.506	1,721.598
On-budget	1,584.605	1,715.677
Off-budget	5.901	5.921
Mandatory	1,175.792	1,155.439

¹ The allocation reflects the discretionary spending limits as outlined in section 251(b) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (BBEDCA), including eligible adjustments to those limits resulting from the enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260). The outlay figures included in this table reflect enactment of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127), the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (P.L. 116-136), the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act (P.L. 116-139), and the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act (P.L. 116-159), which generated \$178,338 million in outlays from appropriations that were designated as emergencies pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of BBEDCA.

ALLOCATION OF SPENDING AUTHORITY TO SENATE COMMITTEE OTHER THAN APPROPRIATIONS

[Pursuant to Section 302 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and S. Con. Res. 5]

[\$ in billions]

	2021	2021-2025	2021-2030
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:			
Budget Authority	240.315	831.870	1,562.654
Outlays	202.027	733.208	1,388.412
Armed Services:			
Budget Authority	192.932	1,039.345	1,747.835
Outlays	192.833	1,038.410	1,746.471
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:			
Budget Authority	-463.909	-378.485	-269.169
Outlays	-10.918	3.158	6.455
Commerce, Science, and Transportation:			
Budget Authority	345.609	417.066	507.766
Outlays	314.473	381.777	449.022
Energy and Natural Resources:			
Budget Authority	7.117	34.430	61.131
Outlays	5.013	27.109	58.801
Environment and Public Works:			
Budget Authority	68.678	264.412	510.612
Outlays	21.964	34.852	55.646
Finance:			
Budget Authority	2,993.294	14,655.178	34,329.717
Outlays	2,980.805	14,587.196	34,246.494
Foreign Relations:			
Budget Authority	51.566	229.018	447.704
Outlays	41.156	215.099	433.745
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:			
Budget Authority	17.289	132.371	268.697
Outlays	27.594	121.193	244.258
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:			
Budget Authority	155.755	816.524	1,737.240
Outlays	154.534	809.992	1,720.393
Indian Affairs:			
Budget Authority	0.873	2.868	5.004
Outlays	0.968	3.180	4.987
Judiciary:			
Budget Authority	20.244	92.364	181.210
Outlays	23.738	96.792	185.732
Rules and Administration:			
Budget Authority	0.042	0.228	0.474
Outlays	0.019	0.116	0.268
Intelligence:			
Budget Authority	0.514	2.570	5.140
Outlays	0.514	2.570	5.140
Veterans' Affairs:			
Budget Authority	135.958	726.288	1,581.379
Outlays	136.349	727.702	1,583.336
Small Business:			
Budget Authority	-144.559	-144.559	-144.559
Outlays	1.941	2.146	2.146
Unassigned to Committee:			
Budget Authority	662.249	-4,019.387	-11,161.327
Outlays	189.750	-4,045.408	-11,073.561

Includes entitlements funded in annual appropriation acts.

BUDGET AGGREGATES

[Pursuant to Section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and S. Con. Res. 5]
[\$ in billions]

	2021	2021–2025	2021–2030
Spending:			
Budget Authority	5,868,572	N.A.	N.A.
Outlays	5,998,437	N.A.	N.A.
Revenue	2,523,057	15,314,642	35,075,136

N.A. = Not Applicable.

SOCIAL SECURITY LEVELS

[Pursuant to Section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and S. Con. Res. 5]
[\$ in billions]

	2021	2021–2025	2021–2030
Outlays	1,094,225	6,134,664	14,186,965
Revenue	967,243	5,214,558	11,595,674

PAY-AS-YOU-GO SCORECARD FOR THE SENATE
[\$ in billions]

	Balances
Fiscal Year 2021	0
Fiscal Years 2021–2025	0
Fiscal Years 2021–2030	0

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF PROTESTS
IN BAHRAIN

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, 10 years ago Bahraini citizens joined many others across the Middle East in what became known as the Arab Spring, an eruption of popular protest and a call for reform and democracy that spread across the region.

In Bahrain, the Arab Spring took the form of peaceful protest. Families marched together and protestors gathered in Manama's Pearl Roundabout urging the King to grant greater economic and political rights, particularly for Bahrain's Shia majority.

The King could have responded to these peaceful protests with dialogue or discussion. He did not. The regime deployed state security forces against the demonstrators, unleashing a wave of violence and repression.

Journalists and human rights advocates documented the regime's use of tear gas and rubber bullets against the unarmed crowds. Security forces beat a number of protestors and arbitrarily detained many more, targeting even the physicians who volunteered to tend to the wounded. Security forces shot one young protestor, Ali Mushaima, in the back, killing him.

Bahrain's authorities made clear that day that they had no intention of conducting a meaningful dialogue or adopting significant reforms. They have held to that position for the last decade.

Even the Trump administration, which made no secret of its desire to downplay or overlook human rights abuses, documented in its most recent human rights report Bahrain's ongoing "restrictions on freedom of expression, the press, and the internet, including censorship, site blocking, and criminal libel; substantial interference with the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of association . . . restrictions on freedom of movement, including revocation of citizenship; and restrictions on political participation, including

banning former members of al-Wifaq and Wa'ad from running as candidates in elections."

Bahrain has long been a valued security partner in a volatile region of the world. In addition, Bahrain hosts the Navy's 5th Fleet. This is precisely why the United States needs to engage Bahrain on these issues and to encourage reforms.

If Bahrainis come to associate the United States with their government's cruelty and repression, this security partnership could become much less reliable. If the Monarchy were overrun by Bahrainis who had come to hate the United States due to our inaction in the face of gross human rights abuses, what would happen to our military base and the thousands of Americans who live in the country? It is a question I think we would all rather not have to answer.

Mr. President, the Arab Spring of 10 years ago has long since given way to an Arab Winter in Bahrain and across much of the Middle East. In 2011, tens of thousands of Bahrainis took to the streets with hopes of a more inclusive and representative society. They are sadly still waiting for those hopes to be realized.

I am heartened that President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken have already taken steps to reprioritize human rights as a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy. That must include working to hold our adversaries accountable but also speaking hard truths when allies lose their way.

It is with this in mind that on the 10th anniversary of the Arab Spring, I call on the Biden-Harris administration to urge Bahrain's King to release political prisoners, including human rights defenders and members of the political opposition, and to engage them in a credible dialogue about a more inclusive future for all Bahrainis.

CONFIRMATION OF GINA MARIE
RAIMONDO

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for the confirmation of Governor Gina Raimondo, an experienced and dedicated public servant, to be Secretary of the Department of Commerce. I believe Gina Raimondo's extensive leadership

experience serving the people of Rhode Island as Governor positions her well to lead the Biden administration's ambitious agenda at the Department of Commerce.

As Secretary of Commerce, Governor Raimondo will take on challenges that directly affect my home State of Maryland. That starts with fighting for an inclusive economy with shared prosperity that truly works for everyone. The struggles of low-income and minority communities hardest hit by the pandemic have shone a harsh light on inequities ingrained in our economy. We must root out these structural problems by supporting the work of vital institutions like the Minority Business Development Agency and Economic Development Administration. And small businesses will continue to need assistance for the remainder of the COVID-19 pandemic and long afterward to ensure that we emerge from this crisis with a more resilient economy. We also need to ensure that the United States can compete in international trade by leveraging the International Trade Administration's enforcement capabilities and strengthen our manufacturing sector by harnessing the power of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, located in Gaithersburg. We must also support the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's work to fight the devastating impact of climate change and protect Maryland's Chesapeake Bay. Finally, we must improve and depoliticize our census process, which still faces challenges of data accuracy, quality, and protection.

I am confident in Gina Raimondo's ability to take on these urgent challenges. I voted yes on her nomination and look forward to working closely with her in the years ahead to build a resilient economy that works for every American.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

VERMONT STATE OF THE UNION
ESSAY CONTENT WINNERS

• Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, since 2010, I have sponsored a State of the Union essay contest for Vermont high school students. This contest gives students in my State the opportunity to

articulate what issues they would prioritize if they were President of the United States.

This is the contest's 11th year, and I would like to congratulate the 319 students who participated. It is truly heartening to see so many young people engaged in finding solutions for the problems that face our country. To my mind, this is what democracy is all about.

A volunteer panel of Vermont teachers reviewed the essays and chose William Taggard as this year's winner. William, a junior at Brattleboro Union High School, wrote about the State of our Nation's democracy. Emilia De Jounge, a sophomore at Burr and Burton Academy, was the second place winner. Emilia wrote about gun control. Simon Rosenbaum, a junior at Vermont Commons School, was the third place winner, with an essay on democracy.

I am very proud to enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the essays submitted by William, Emilia and Simon.

The material follows:

WINNER, WILLIAM TAGGARD, BRATTLEBORO UNION HIGH SCHOOL, JUNIOR

In the wake of the Watergate scandal of 1972, author and journalist Frank Herbert remarked that "good governance never depends upon laws, but upon the personal qualities of those who govern. The machinery of government is always subordinate to those who administer that machinery." The current administration has overseen an unprecedented undermining of trust in our government, the scale of which is scarcely rivaled in our nation's history. The subsequent damage leads us to Herbert's inevitable conclusion: "The most important element of government, therefore, is the method of choosing leaders."

Our democracy has been under unprecedented pressure in recent months, culminating in the insurrection in our nation's capital. Fortunately, democracy and the truth have prevailed. However, our current system leaves ample room for improvement: namely the electoral college. We face a fundamental problem that puts at risk one of the most essential assets of our great nation. We need to review the merits of the electoral college and determine how best to protect our democratic process. Two of the last three Presidents elected have failed to secure a majority of the popular vote, suggesting that while the Declaration of Independence states we are all created equal, our current democratic system makes some votes more impactful than others. A select number of "swing states" hold a disproportionate amount of power in determining the outcome of a race.

A short term solution to the flaws of the electoral college system is the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC). This is an agreement between states to award all of their electoral votes to the candidate that wins the national popular vote. To become effective, its signatories must control at least 270 electoral votes. Currently, they hold a total of 196 votes, with another 67 pending. By eliminating "swing states," the NPVIC would spread voting power equally, regardless of which state you live in. This change would force politicians to campaign not only to "swing state" voters, but to everyone.

Long term, it is in the country's best interest to consider alternate methods of voting. Our current system forces voters to pick be-

tween two popular candidates rather than support their true favorite, but this dynamic only arises from our pick one voting system. Methods such as approval or instant runoff voting can combat polarization, legitimize third parties, and eliminate spoiler candidates; forms of proportional representation can transcend gerrymandering and incentivize cooperation through coalition building. These practices allow voters to voice their conscience without worry of "wasting" their vote and fix many of the problems our current system has.

The importance of choosing good leaders has perhaps never been more apparent—divisive rhetoric dominates the political sphere, suffocating any chance at productive discourse. As President-elect Joe Biden cautioned, "the words of a president matter." We would be wise to ensure that those words come from a leader whose authority derives not from the exploitation of the electoral system, but rather from broad consensus and a commitment to the growth and prosperity of our nation.

SECOND PLACE, EMILIA DEJOUNGE, BURR AND BURTON ACADEMY, SOPHOMORE

Columbine, Sandy Hook, Parkland . . . every parent's worst nightmare, yet what has America done to prevent another? A study by the American Journal of Medicine in 2016 found that Americans are 25 times more likely to die from gun homicide than people in other wealthy countries. Our futile attempts at gun control have seen little success, as gun violence rates are still steadily rising, increasing almost 25% from 2019 to 2020. The right to bear arms is in our Constitution, yet that does not negate the need for sound and rational policies around the sales of firearms. Currently, nearly 400 million guns are privately owned in the US, more than the country's population, with sharp increases in recent years. Gun violence needs to be recognized and addressed as a top priority public health issue.

"It is much easier to be a legal gun owner in the US than it is to be a legal driver," says David Hemenway, director of Injury Control Research at Harvard. A first step to prevent gun violence is to make it more difficult to purchase a gun through safe gun-owning training programs and requiring registration of all gun purchases. According to the State Firearms Law project, just seven states require a permit to possess a gun of any kind. A 2014 study in the Journal of Urban Health found that Missouri's 2007 repeal of its permit-to-purchase handgun law was associated with a 25% increase in firearms homicide rates.

Another important step to combating gun violence is investing in research. According to a 2017 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, gun violence research should have received \$1.4 billion from 2004 to 2015, based on mortality rates and funding levels for other leading causes of death, but only received 1.6% of the projected amount. According to Dr. Elinore Kaufman, chief resident in surgery at New York-Presbyterian, "we know far less about gun violence as a cause of injury and death than we do about almost every medical problem." In 1996, the NRA pressured Congress to pass the Dickey Amendment mandating that no CDC funds could be spent on research that promotes gun control, which has impaired our ability to make informed legislation.

We can look to other nations to see that gun control works. Germany has been successful in upholding the rights of its citizens, yet preventing unnecessary deaths. With one of the highest weapons-per-head rates in the world, Germany maintains one of the lowest gun homicide rates in Europe: a death rate of 0.05 per 1,000 people, compared with 3.34 in

the US, and the rate in Germany is decreasing. This accomplishment is due to strict gun laws which include psychiatric evaluations, random spot checks, and limits to numbers of guns per person. The US can enact its own version of these laws while upholding the rights of citizens. Gun violence is a widespread disease plaguing our country which can be prevented through more effective control policies.

THIRD PLACE, SIMON ROSENBAUM, VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL, JUNIOR

This past year terrified me. It was not just the carnage and isolation of the pandemic. I wasn't afraid of war in Iran. I was afraid because a United States Senator said it was okay to assault peaceful protestors in front of the White House for a photo op and negate the constitutional right to assembly. I was afraid because the President of the United States is fighting to subvert the cornerstone of our democracy: our election process. I was afraid because the America I love and believe in felt like it was on the brink of collapse. The most pressing issue that we as Americans face today is the preservation of our democracy.

Before and after the November election, people on all sides of the political spectrum have carried on about policy and rhetoric, conspiracy theories and misinformation. No one seems to understand the gravity of the situation. What makes America special is our belief in a functioning democracy and an uncompromising defense of our constitutional rights. My ancestors came to America to grant that to me. Our predecessors built that for all of us. The one inheritance bestowed upon every American is the dignity of being American. This year, our democracy was pushed to the brink, our rights were subverted, and the dignity of America was cast aside. To me, this felt like the end.

Of course, it was not the end. We Americans kept fighting for a more equitable, democratic union and it looks like our democracy will survive. My concern is for next time. What happens if next time, the system is assaulted by a savvy politician, someone who understands the systems they hope to destroy? This year, we saw that people in positions of power would do anything to keep it.

To preserve the union and our nation, we must eliminate the possibility for a President to wield unitary executive authority. Diminishing the power of the Executive Branch will mitigate the damage that an unfit executive could cause. We must also depoliticize judicial appointments, and instate a nonpartisan federal oversight commission independent of the executive branch to ensure that political leaders are working for the people.

Additionally, we must rebuild our demoralized, undervalued federal public service. These patriotic, nonpartisan public servants have been caught in the crosshairs of this attempted coup, and we must put them first as we rebuild from this sabotage of the framework of our country. They are the ones who put their careers and in some cases their lives on the line to save America. Now we must repay that priceless debt. Increasing protections for whistleblowers, creating a federal public service academy similar to our military academies, and simply paying public servants more for the invaluable work they do will make great strides in strengthening the system against assault next time.

This past year, the great American experiment almost came to an end. The most pressing issue we face now is how do we make sure this never happens again?●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:32 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 803. An act to designate certain lands in the State of Colorado as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1319. An act to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of S. Con. Res. 5.

The message also announced that pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 1928a, and the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Speaker appoints the following Members on the part of the House of Representatives to the United States Group of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly: Mr. Connolly of Virginia, Ms. Sánchez of California, Mr. Larsen of Washington, Mr. Meeks of New York, Mr. Brendan F. Boyle of Pennsylvania, Mr. Vela of Texas, Ms. Titus of Nevada, and Mr. Turner of Ohio.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 2 of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 715a), and the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Speaker appoints the following Members on the part of the House of Representatives to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission: Mr. Thompson of California and Mr. Wittman of Virginia.

The message also announced that pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 6913, and the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Speaker appoints the following Members on the part of the House of Representatives to the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China: Mr. Suozzi of New York, Mr. Malinowski of New Jersey, Ms. Wexton of Virginia, Ms. Tlaib of Michigan, Mr. Mast of Florida, Mrs. Hartzler of Missouri, and Mrs. Steel of California.

The message further announced that pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 2302, and the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council: Mr. Deutch of Florida, Mr. Schneider of Illinois, Mrs. Lawrence of Michigan, Mr. Zeldin of New York, and Mr. Kustoff of Tennessee.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 803. An act to designate certain lands in the State of Colorado as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bills were read the first time:

H.R. 5. An act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1319. An act to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of S. Con. Res. 5.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-531. A communication from the General Counsel, Government Accountability Office, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Impoundment Control Act of 1974 and the Release of Certain Withheld Amounts; to the Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Appropriations; Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Commerce, Science, and Transportation; Energy and Natural Resources; Environment and Public Works; Foreign Relations; Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; the Judiciary; and Rules and Administration.

EC-532. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Complex Polymeric Polyhydroxy Acids; Amendment to the Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance" (FRL No. 10018-54-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-533. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Oxalic Acid; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance" (FRL No. 10017-66-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-534. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Orthosulfamuron; Pesticide Tolerance" (FRL No. 10018-53-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-535. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fluxametamide; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 10018-86-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-536. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Emamectin Benzoate; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 10018-70-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-537. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Clopyralid; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 10017-26-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-538. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Benzovindiflupyr; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 10017-32-OCSPP) received in

the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-539. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Extension of Tolerances for Emergency Exemptions (Multiple Chemicals)" (FRL No. 10017-55-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-540. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Streptomycin; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 10017-52-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-541. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Extension of Tolerances for Emergency Exemptions (Multiple Chemicals)" (FRL No. 10017-55-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-542. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Ethaboxam; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 10018-73-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-543. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Benzovindiflupyr; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 10017-32-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-544. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Streptomycin; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 10017-52-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-545. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a violation of the Antideficiency Act that involved fiscal year 2015 Operations and Maintenance (O&M) funds and was assigned case number 20-01; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-546. A communication from the Deputy Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Adjustments to Civil Monetary Penalty Amounts" (Rel. Nos. 33-10918; 34-90874; IA-5664; IC-34166) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-547. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Full Approval of Revised Clean Air Act Operating Permit Program; North Dakota" (FRL No. 10019-27-Region 8) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-548. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division,

Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval of Source-Specific Air Quality Implementation Plans; New Jersey" (FRL No. 10017-00-Region 2) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-549. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of State Air Quality Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Albuquerque-Bernalillo County, New Mexico; Control of Emissions From Existing Hospital/Medical/Infectious Waste Incinerator Units" (FRL No. 10019-25-Region 6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-550. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Colorado; Revisions to Regulation Number 7 and RACT Requirements for 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard for the Denver Metro/North Front Range Nonattainment Area" (FRL No. 10019-22-Region 8) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-551. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Quality State Implementation Plans; Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Utah; Infrastructure Requirements for the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards; Correction" (FRL No. 10018-17-Region 8) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-552. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; West Virginia; 1997 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard Second Maintenance Plan for the West Virginia Portion of the Steubenville-Weirton, Ohio - West Virginia Area Comprising Brooke and Hancock Counties" (FRL No. 10020-08-Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-553. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Washington; Interstate Transport Requirements for the 2010 Sulfur Dioxide National Ambient Air Quality Standards" (FRL No. 10018-22-Region 10) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-554. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Washington; Infrastructure Requirements for the 2010 Sulfur Dioxide and 2015 Ozone Standards" (FRL No. 10018-79-Region 10) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-555. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting,

pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Washington; Inspection and Maintenance Program" (FRL No. 10018-23-Region 10) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-556. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; California; South Coast Air Quality Management District; Ventura County Air Pollution Control District" (FRL No. 10017-02-Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-557. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; California; San Diego Air Pollution Control District" (FRL No. 10018-18-Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-558. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; California; Consumer Products Regulations; Correcting Amendment" (FRL No. 10017-20-Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-559. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Indiana; Final Approval of State Underground Storage Tank Program Revisions - Direct Final Rule" (FRL No. 10020-05-Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-560. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Illinois - Final Authorization of State Hazardous Waste Management Program Revisions" (FRL No. 10017-08-Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-561. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of State Plans (Negative Declarations) for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; Maine and Rhode Island" (FRL No. 10017-79-Region 1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-562. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of State Air Quality Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; State and Maryland; Control of Emissions from Existing Sewage Sludge Incineration Units" (FRL No. 10018-21-Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-563. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Pennsylvania;

1997 8-Hour Ozone NAAQS Second Maintenance Plan for the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre Area" (FRL No. 10018-14-Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-564. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Wisconsin; VOC RACT Requirements for Lithographic Printing Facilities" (FRL No. 10018-39-Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-565. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Pennsylvania; 1997 8-Hour Ozone NAAQS Second Maintenance Plan for the Johnstown Area" (FRL No. 10016-55-Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-566. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; West Virginia; 1997 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard Second Maintenance Plan for the West Virginia Portion for the Charleston, West Virginia Portion for the Charleston, West Virginia Comprising Kanawha and Putnam Counties" (FRL No. 10017-11-Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-567. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Virginia; Negative Declarations Certification for the 2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard Including the 2016 Oil and Natural Gas Control Techniques Guidelines" (FRL No. 10016-88-Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-568. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Pennsylvania; 1997 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards Second Maintenance Plan for the Altoona (Blair County) Area" (FRL No. 10017-26-Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-569. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Pennsylvania; 1997 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard Second Maintenance Plan for the Harrisburg-Lebanon-Carlisle Area" (FRL No. 10016-56-Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-570. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Massachusetts; Infrastructure State Implementation Plan Requirements for the 2015 Ozone Standard" (FRL No. 10018-99-Region 1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-571. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Arkansas; Infrastructure for the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards" (FRL No. 10018-28-Region 6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-572. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Ocean Dumping: Modification of an Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Site Offshore of Humboldt Bay, California" (FRL No. 10016-87-Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-573. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Arkansas; Infrastructure for the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards" (FRL No. 10018-28-Region 6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-574. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; North Carolina; Revisions to Annual Emissions Reporting" (FRL No. 10019-20-Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-575. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; North Carolina; Revisions to Construction and Operation Permits" (FRL No. 10019-56-Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-576. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of State Plans (Negative Declarations) for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; Maine and Rhode Island" (FRL No. 10017-79-Region 1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-577. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Protection of the Stratospheric Ozone: Motor Vehicle Air Conditioning System Servicing" (FRL No. 10014-63-OAR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-578. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standards of Performance for Volatile Organic Liquid Storage Vessels (Including Petroleum Liquid Storage Vessels) for Which Construction, Reconstruction, or Modification Commenced After July 23, 1984" (FRL No. 10019-21-OAR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-579. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division,

Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Virginia: Final Approval of State Underground Storage Tank Program Revisions, Codification, and Incorporation by Reference" (FRL No. 10018-06-Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-580. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "State of Michigan Underground Injection Control (UIC) Class II Program; Primacy Approval" (FRL No. 10018-31-OW) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-581. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Codifying EPA's Adjudicatory Decision on Florida's Clean Water Act Section 404 Program Request" (FRL No. 10018-76-OW) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. WARNER for the Select Committee on Intelligence.

*William Joseph Burns, of Maryland, to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. 518. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to support innovative, evidence-based approaches that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of postsecondary education for all students, to allow pay for success initiatives, to provide additional evaluation authority, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HAGERTY (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 519. A bill to review the use of election security grants in the 2020 presidential election and to prohibit future election security grants to States with unconstitutional election procedures; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 520. A bill to amend the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 to modify a provision relating to acquisition of beach fill; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. CARPER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. DUCKWORTH, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 521. A bill to require the United States Postal Service to continue selling the Multi-

national Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp until all remaining stamps are sold, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LANKFORD (for himself, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. 522. A bill to require each agency, in providing notice of a rule making, to include a link to a 100 word plain language summary of the proposed rule; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 523. A bill to repeal the Office of Financial Research, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BRAUN, and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 524. A bill to abolish the Federal Insurance Office of the Department of the Treasury, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. ROUNDS, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 525. A bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to more comprehensively address the interstate transportation of firearms or ammunition; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BRAUN, and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 526. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to harmonize the definition of employee with the common law; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SMITH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TESTER, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 527. A bill to protect victims of stalking from gun violence; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. SINEMA (for herself and Mr. KELLY):

S. 528. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land to La Paz County, Arizona, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. COONS, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WARNER, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. CARPER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KELLY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. PADILLA, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. LUJAN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. REED, Mr. OSSOFF, and Mr. HICKENLOOPER):

S. 529. A bill to require a background check for every firearm sale; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 530. A bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require shareholder authorization before a public company may make certain political expenditures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. SMITH:

S. 531. A bill to provide additional funds for Federal and State facility energy resiliency programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 532. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the energy tax credit to apply to qualified distributed wind energy property; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LANKFORD (for himself, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. 533. A bill to require a guidance clarity statement on certain agency guidance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 534. A bill to improve the effectiveness of tribal child support enforcement agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. ERNST (for herself, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 535. A bill to authorize the location of a memorial on the National Mall to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces that served on active duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 536. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a credit for wages received by individuals that are less than the median wage; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Ms. SINEMA):

S. 537. A bill to provide a tax credit for certain expenses associated with protecting employees from COVID-19; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 538. A bill to repeal portions of a regulation issued by the State Superintendent of Education of the District of Columbia that require child care workers to have a degree, a certificate, or a minimum number of credit hours from an institution of higher education; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BRAUN, and Ms. SINEMA):

S. 539. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the use of video cameras for patient safety and law enforcement at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. KAINE:

S. 540. A bill to require Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies to report in-

formation related to allegations of misconduct of law enforcement officers to the Attorney General, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 541. A bill to require the Secretary of Energy to obtain the consent of affected State and local governments before making an expenditure from the Nuclear Waste Fund for a nuclear waste repository, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 542. A bill to promote international exchanges on best election practices, to cultivate more secure democratic institutions around the world, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 543. A bill to amend the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, to establish a cattle contract library, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. ERNST (for herself, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. BENNET, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. COONS, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. COTTON, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BARRASSO, and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 544. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate one week each year as "Buddy Check Week" for the purpose of outreach and education concerning peer wellness checks for veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BROWN, and Mrs. FISCHER):

S. 545. A bill to permanently exempt payments made from the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Account from sequestration under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 546. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit former Members and elected officers of Congress from lobbying Congress at any time after leaving office; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COONS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LUJAN, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SMITH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TESTER, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 547. A bill to provide relief for multiemployer and single employer pension plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 548. A bill to convey land in Anchorage, Alaska, to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 549. A bill to provide for the conveyance of certain property to the Tanana Tribal Council located in Tanana, Alaska, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 550. A bill to provide for the conveyance of certain property to the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium located in Sitka, Alaska, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 551. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the Employee Retention Tax Credit to include certain startup businesses; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 552. A bill to direct the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to submit to Congress a report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global basic education programs; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Ms. DUCKWORTH:

S. Res. 86. A resolution recommitting the United States to the promotion of disability rights and to the values enshrined in the Prologue Room of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in the District of Columbia, and recognizing the enduring contributions that individuals with disabilities have made throughout the history of the United States and the role of the disability community in the ongoing struggle for civil rights in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 50

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 50, a bill to temporarily designate Venezuela under section 244(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to permit eligible nationals of Venezuela to be granted temporary protected status.

S. 65

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 65, a bill to ensure that goods made with forced labor in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China do not enter the United States market, and for other purposes.

S. 89

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 89, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to secure medical opinions for veterans with service-connected disabilities who die from COVID-19 to determine whether their service-connected disabilities were the principal or contributory causes of death, and for other purposes.

S. 140

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Alaska

(Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 140, a bill to improve data collection and monitoring of the Great Lakes, oceans, bays, estuaries, and coasts, and for other purposes.

S. 194

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 194, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide treatment for eating disorders for dependents of members of the uniformed services.

S. 251

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 251, a bill to provide that for purposes of determining compliance with title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 in athletics, sex shall be recognized based solely on a person's reproductive biology and genetics at birth.

S. 256

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 256, a bill to provide funding for humanitarian relief at the southern border of the United States.

S. 325

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 325, a bill to amend the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act to extend the deadline for a report by the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children, and for other purposes.

S. 377

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 377, a bill to promote and protect from discrimination living organ donors.

S. 395

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 395, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain tax credits related to electric cars, and for other purposes.

S. 435

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor

of S. 435, a bill to extend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.

S. 475

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 475, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to designate Juneteenth National Independence Day as a legal public holiday.

S. 488

At the request of Mr. HAGERTY, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 488, a bill to provide for congressional review of actions to terminate or waive sanctions imposed with respect to Iran.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 534. A bill to improve the effectiveness of tribal child support enforcement agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 534

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Tribal Child Support Enforcement Act".

SEC. 2. IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRIBAL CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.

(a) IMPROVING THE COLLECTION OF PAST-DUE CHILD SUPPORT THROUGH STATE AND TRIBAL PARITY IN THE ALLOWABLE USE OF TAX INFORMATION.—

(1) AMENDMENT TO THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.—Section 464 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 664) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(d) APPLICABILITY TO INDIAN TRIBES AND TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVING A GRANT UNDER THIS PART.—This section, except for the requirement to distribute amounts in accordance with section 457, shall apply to an Indian tribe or tribal organization receiving a grant under section 455(f) in the same manner in which this section applies to a State with a plan approved under this part."

(2) AMENDMENTS TO THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE.—

(A) Section 6103(a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking "any local child support enforcement agency" and inserting "any tribal or local child support enforcement agency".

(B) Section 6103(a)(3) of such Code is amended by inserting " (8) " after " (6) ".

(C) Section 6103(l) of such Code is amended—

(i) in paragraph (6)—

(I) by striking "or local" in subparagraph (A) and inserting "tribal, or local";

(II) by striking "AND LOCAL" in the heading thereof and inserting "TRIBAL, AND LOCAL";

(III) by striking "The following" in subparagraph (B) and inserting "The";

(IV) by striking the colon and all that follows in subparagraph (B) and inserting a period; and

(V) by adding at the end the following:

"(D) STATE, TRIBAL, OR LOCAL CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.—For purposes of this paragraph, the following shall be treated as a State, tribal, or local child support enforcement agency:

"(i) Any agency of a State or political subdivision thereof operating pursuant to a plan described in section 454 of the Social Security Act which has been approved by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under part D of title IV of such Act.

"(ii) Any child support enforcement agency of an Indian tribe or tribal organization receiving a grant under section 455(f) of the Social Security Act."

(ii) in paragraph (8)—

(I) in subparagraph (A), by striking "or State or local" and inserting "State, tribal, or local";

(II) by adding the following at the end of subparagraph (B): "The information disclosed to any child support enforcement agency under subparagraph (A) with respect to any individual with respect to whom child support obligations are sought to be established or enforced may be disclosed by such agency to any agent of such agency which is under contract with such agency for purposes of, and to the extent necessary in, establishing and collecting child support obligations from, and locating, individuals owing such obligations.";

(III) by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following:

"(C) STATE, TRIBAL, OR LOCAL CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'State, tribal, or local child support enforcement agency' has the same meaning as when used in paragraph (6)(D)."; and

(IV) by striking "AND LOCAL" in the heading thereof and inserting "TRIBAL, AND LOCAL"; and

(iii) in paragraph (10)(B), by adding at the end the following new clause:

"(iii) The information disclosed to any child support enforcement agency under subparagraph (A) with respect to any individual with respect to whom child support obligations are sought to be established or enforced may be disclosed by such agency to any agent of such agency which is under contract with such agency for purposes of, and to the extent necessary in, establishing and collecting child support obligations from, and locating, individuals owing such obligations."

(D) Subsection (c) of section 6402 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following: "For purposes of this subsection, any reference to a State shall include a reference to any Indian tribe or tribal organization receiving a grant under section 455(f) of the Social Security Act."

(b) REIMBURSEMENT FOR REPORTS.—Section 453(g) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 653(g)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking "STATE"; and

(2) by striking "and State" and inserting "State, and tribal".

(c) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—Paragraphs (7) and (33) of sections 454 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 654) are each amended by striking "450b" and inserting "5304".

By Mr. KAINE:

S. 540. A bill to require Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies to report information related to allegations of misconduct of law enforcement officers to the Attorney General, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I am pleased to introduce the Cost of Police Misconduct Act. This legislation strives to increase transparency and accountability, saving taxpayer dollars and potentially lives by requiring Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies to report police misconduct allegations and related judgments or settlements to the Department of Justice.

Last year, the horrific murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery made it clear that systemic reform in policing is needed now more than ever. On top of having to bear the loss of friends and loved ones, these very communities who suffer from this misconduct have to foot its bill, yet they are often in the dark on the full size of that bill. Citizens deserve to know what they are paying for unjust policing practices.

In the last 10 years, 31 of 50 cities in the Nation with the highest police-to-civilian ratio spent more than \$3 billion to settle police misconduct lawsuits. These large judgments and settlements paid by State and local governments are typically paid from liability insurance, from a general or dedicated municipal fund, or from issuing bonds. In particular, municipal bonds have become increasingly more commonplace to cover the cost of large judgments and settlements that exceed insurer liability coverage or the capacity of dedicated municipal funds. This often results in passing costs to taxpayers, who must pay nearly double the cost of the judgment or settlement because the city or county must pay fees to financial institutions and interest to investors. This is unacceptable.

Specifically, the Cost of Police Misconduct Act seeks to remedy this costly and pervasive issue by ensuring the Department of Justice maintains a comprehensive public database of misconduct data and trends that have gone largely unreported by Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, this legislation makes certain important data—such as the type of alleged misconduct, the total amount of the settlement, and the source of funds used to cover the cost of any one judgment or settlement—is properly preserved in an easily accessible manner. Additionally, this legislation directs the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study of the information reported to determine the leading cause of judgments and settlements related to allegations of misconduct and what interventions are necessary to prevent them.

Police misconduct takes lives, erodes trust, and sparks fear. I am hopeful the Senate will act upon my legislation this year to shine a light on the price of police misconduct, ending the secrecy and hopefully spurring agencies to put a stop to it.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 86—RECOMMITTING THE UNITED STATES TO THE PROMOTION OF DISABILITY RIGHTS AND TO THE VALUES ENSHRINED IN THE PROLOGUE ROOM OF THE FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AND RECOGNIZING THE ENDURING CONTRIBUTIONS THAT INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES HAVE MADE THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE ROLE OF THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY IN THE ONGOING STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE UNITED STATES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Ms. DUCKWORTH submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

S. RES. 86

Whereas the Prologue Room of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial (referred to in this preamble as the “Memorial”), which prominently displays a statue, sculpted by Robert Graham, of the 32nd President of the United States in a wheelchair, was dedicated on January 10, 2001, by President Bill Clinton;

Whereas the dedication of the Prologue Room, a critically important addition to the Memorial because of its historically accurate depiction of the disability of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, occurred 4 years after the initial dedication of the Memorial;

Whereas the dedication of the Prologue Room was the culmination of a 6-year campaign led by the disability community to ensure that future generations knew that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt led the United States during the Great Depression and World War II while using a wheelchair;

Whereas President Franklin Delano Roosevelt became paralyzed at the age of 39, became a wheelchair user, and never took another step unassisted after acquiring his disability;

Whereas, at the dedication ceremony for the Prologue Room in 2001, President Bill Clinton said, “This is a monument to freedom The power of the statue is in its immediacy, and in its reminder to all who touch, all who see, all who walk or wheel around, that they, too, are free, but every person must claim freedom”;

Whereas individuals with disabilities have always been integral to the civil rights movement in the United States, and the ongoing fight of the disability community for equal rights and opportunities in the United States continues as individuals throughout the United States strive to build “a more perfect Union”;

Whereas the campaign to create the Prologue Room with a statue of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in a wheelchair was led by Michael R. Deland, then-Chairman of the National Organization on Disability, Alan A. Reich, founder and then-President of the National Organization on Disability, and James Dickson, who directed the grassroots campaign for the addition of the wheelchair statue;

Whereas former Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and George H.W. Bush sent letters of support for the addition of the disability representation at the Memorial;

Whereas 16 grandchildren of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued a letter on April 8, 1997, stating, “The public’s interest is in learning about those dramatically challenging times and about the courage, strength and determination of the man who led the country and the world in overcoming great odds, and in becoming the single greatest example for democracy, freedom, and enterprise in the history of the world. It would be a disservice to history and the public’s interest if the impact of polio on the man were to be hidden. The goal of the FDR Memorial must be to enable future generations to understand the whole man and the events and experiences that helped to shape his character.”;

Whereas, as of the date of adoption of this resolution, the Memorial is impacted by deferred maintenance and accessibility issues;

Whereas the Great American Outdoors Act (Public Law 116-152; 134 Stat. 682) was signed into law on August 4, 2020, to address the deferred maintenance at National Park Service sites, including the Memorial;

Whereas the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 701 et seq.) states that no qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of disability, “be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance”;

Whereas the primarily artistic braille renderings at the Memorial are inaccessible to blind and low-vision visitors, the very individuals that braille is intended to serve;

Whereas accessible signs and placards for blind and low-vision visitors—

(1) are not a permanent feature incorporated into the Memorial; and

(2) do not sufficiently bridge the accessibility gap; and

Whereas providing a library of expanded accessible materials to support the educational experience of all visitors, both physically at the Memorial site and virtually, would work to enhance the legacy of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s disability and the community: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) calls on the United States to recommit itself to the promotion of disability rights and to the values enshrined in the Prologue Room at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial (referred to in this resolution as the “Memorial”), at home and abroad, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the dedication of the Prologue Room;

(2) recognizes the important work of the disability community, and the historic campaign championed by that community, that led to the expansion of the Memorial to include a statue that clearly and visibly depicts President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in a wheelchair; and

(3) calls on the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation, a congressionally chartered nonprofit organization—

(A) to continue to increase access to the Memorial for individuals with disabilities, as required by law, including through the installation of tactile braille on signs and placards as specified in the document of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled of the Library of Congress entitled “Specification 800:2014 Braille Book and Pamphlets” and dated October 2014; and

(B) to support the development of accessible educational materials to ensure awareness is raised about the history of the Memorial and disability rights.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I have 4 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is au-

thorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 5 and H.R. 1319

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand that there are two bills at the desk, and I ask for their first reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5) to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 1319) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of S. Con. Res. 5.

Mr. SCHUMER. I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provi-

sions of rule XIV, I object to my own request, all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The bills will receive their second reading on the next legislative day.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 7:09 P.M. TODAY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to adjourn until 7:09 p.m. today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:07 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at 7:09 p.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 2, 2021:

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

GINA MARIE RAIMONDO, OF RHODE ISLAND, TO BE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

CECILIA ELENA ROUSE, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS